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STUDIES



Strategy Papers
on the Arctic or High North:
A comparative study and analysis

ALYSON JK BAILES & LASSI HEININEN



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© Alyson JK Bailes & Lassi Heininen

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PREFACE

The future challenges expected in the environmental, economic, security and other spheres as the Arctic ice melts have become a hot topic in governmental, as well as academic and media, circles. In the last decade, each of the eight countries that founded the Arctic Council – Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the USA – has published at least one major policy document on the topic; and the European Union as an institution has followed suit. Many of these documents describe themselves as ‘strategies’, making them also a sub-set of any comprehensive national security strategy that exists. The individual documents reveal a lot about national concerns and priorities, both international and domestic, and about national assumptions and preferences regarding the future governance framework for addressing Arctic challenges. That does not, of course, mean that their every word can or should be taken at face value.

What is the relevance of small state studies in this context? Among world regions, the Arctic presents one of the sharpest contrasts in neighbouring states’ sizes, ranging from the mighty USA and Russian Federation to five Nordic states none of which exceeds 10 million souls. Even smaller are the populations of Greenland and the Faroes, which – while part of the realm of Denmark – face their own distinct Arctic issues, and are starting to develop their own Arctic policy-forming processes.

The Arctic thus offers an excellent potential study in how large, medium-sized (Canada) and small states look at one and the same agenda: an agenda that raises roughly parallel issues for them all, yet poses widely disparate challenges in terms of their respective

abilities to master and guide events. According to general small state theory, the weaker players in such a constellation should seek solutions through protection from larger powers, and/or in institutionalized “shelters” plus the promotion of legal and normative codes to ensure a peaceful and level playing-field. Are the small players of the Arctic in fact developing such strategies? If so, what concrete answers can they find within this region’s idiosyncratic, still only part-formed environment of power relations and international governance?

The present Occasional Paper offers facts, analysis, and stimulus for further research and reflection on all these issues. It not only covers the nine strategies mentioned – with their historical and political context, and a detailed comparison of their key points – but also discusses how these documents relate to received International Relations theories, and the very question of what such “strategies” mean. It is also very timely as an example of close cooperation between senior researchers based in Iceland and Finland. Further collaborative research on High North issues is urgently needed both in a Nordic and a West Nordic framework, not least to help prepare a new generation of young researchers for tackling these fast growing challenges. The University of Iceland and its Centre for Small State Studies intend to play a full part in such work, and are pleased to present this Occasional Paper as a freely accessible contribution. It is being simultaneously published by the Northern Research Forum (NRF) on its website at <http://www.nrf.is>.

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**STRATEGY PAPERS ON
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By Alyson JK Bailes and Lassi Heininen

In the last five years as international attention has been drawn back to the affairs of the Earth's North Polar regions, Canada, the Russian Federation, the USA and all the Nordic countries have published their official strategy papers on the Arctic, or the High North.¹ This paper offers a comparative study and analysis of these "strategies" – here set out in time-sequence of adoption – plus the corresponding policy papers of the European Union.² The basic information for the analysis provided is based on "Arctic Strategies and Policies – Inventory and Comparative Study" by Lassi Heininen (2011), as the first comprehensive study on the Arctic strategies. Aside from first-order comparisons, the present study raises questions about declared strategy versus true intent, and about the conceptual model(s) of international affairs in which these documents seem to situate themselves.

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- 1 For the purposes of the present paper – which deals with policy frameworks rather than precise scientific or legal distinctions – these two terms may be taken as equivalent.
 - 2 For full document titles and references see below.

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

At the start of the 21st century, the Arctic region including the Arctic Ocean is in a middle of a rapid and multi-functional process of geopolitical, environmental and (geo-)economic change, and there is a growing global interest toward the region and its natural resources (e.g. Heininen 2010a). The prospect that global warming and the shrinking of sea ice will open up access to new seabed energy resources, and also new routes for shipping, has seized the attention not just of local states – particularly the five Arctic Ocean littoral states³ – but also of major powers from outside the region, such as France, the UK and the European Union collectively in Europe, and China, Japan and South Korea from Asia. At the same time, the more negative implications of the warming scenario are raising widespread and justified concern. The delicate polar environment can be damaged both by climate warming itself – with the concomitant pollution – and by the prospective growth of economic exploitation. New safety hazards will arise for existing and incoming populations; and at the extreme, competition for profit and control in a rapidly changing environment could lead to clashes among the nations. Meanwhile the rate of Arctic melting, and its effect on atmospheric and sea conditions and the biosphere, will have powerful implications for the whole globe’s experience of climate change. The result is a regional security agenda of growing complexity that interlocks with global processes and which, from

3 Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, the Russian Federation and the USA.

every angle, poses serious challenges for international governance (Bailes 2009b)

A further special feature of the Arctic is that the region has no single treaty regime regulating its management, like the Antarctic Treaty System: and all the front-rank players (i.e. the Arctic states whose strategies are analysed here) are determined that it should not have one. Instead, the environmental, scientific, human, and many functional aspects of the regional agenda are covered by the work of the Arctic Council,⁴ which can be seen as acting as an emerging international Arctic regime (see Nilsson 2007, 80-90). The Council brings together the five littoral states and the other Nordic states (Finland, Iceland and Sweden) as well as representatives of non-state actors such as the indigenous peoples, and even a few non-Arctic states as observers.

Conflicting territorial claims to the as yet unallocated parts of the Arctic seabed have been tabled, or are being prepared for tabling, in the context of the (globally valid) UN Law of the Sea Convention – except by the USA, which has not yet ratified UNCLOS.⁵ The global International Maritime Organization (IMO)⁶ has suitable competence to develop regulations for Arctic shipping – and provided the framework to adopt a recent legally binding agreement of the Arctic Council states on search and rescue – while an international fishing regime developed for the North Atlantic could potentially be extended Northwards.⁷ In the European sector, the

4 See <http://www.arctic-council.org>

5 Full text of UNCLOS and further information available at http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements_overview_convention.htm.

6 See <http://www.imo.org>.

7 Several Arctic players have mentioned the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission,

frameworks created by the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)⁸ and the EU's Northern Dimension⁹ for cooperation with Russia already cover many aspects of coexistence in the high Northern latitudes (Bailes and Ólafsson, forthcoming). To this already complex set of local governance options must now be added the EU's attempts to stake an institutional claim, particularly as regards policy for the economic/environmental/energy nexus, and the tentative interest of NATO. NATO held a high-level conference on the issue at Reykjavik in January 2009 that produced a short set of Chairman's Conclusions, but any further or more formal policy-shaping is being resisted by Allies who prefer to keep national control (see Bailes, 2010).

The attitudes of individual states to all this are naturally shaped by what organizations they belong to (see Tables 1 and 2); as well as their experience within organizations, and their beliefs about which structures may best further their own interests.

NEAFC, in this connection, although there are other possibilities.

8 See <http://www.beac.st>.

9 See http://www.eeas.europa.eu/north_dim/index_en.htm.

TABLE 1. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ARCTIC STATES IN
INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ECONOMIC AREAS

	<u>EU</u>	<u>EEA</u>	<u>NATO</u>	<u>EAPC</u>	<u>NAFTA</u>	<u>G7/8/20</u>
Canada			x	x	x	x
Denmark	x	x	x	x		
– Greenland	(x-OCT)		x			
– Faroes			x			
Finland	x	x		x		
Iceland		x	x	x		
Norway		x	x	x		
Russia				x		x
Sweden	x	x		x		
USA			x	x	x	x
(EU)		x				x

KEY TO INSTITUTIONS:

EU = European Union; EEA = European Economic Area

NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization;

EAPC = (NATO's) Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

NAFTA = North Atlantic Free Trade Area

G 7/8/20 = Group of 7/8 Industrialized Nations; Group of 20

OCT = Overseas Countries and Territories (of the EU)

TABLE 2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ARCTIC STATES
IN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS

	<u>AEPS/AC</u>	<u>Ilulissat</u>	<u>IASC</u>	<u>BEAC</u>	<u>CBSS</u>	<u>NC(M)</u>	<u>ND</u>
Canada	x	x	x				
Denmark	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
- Greenland (x)	(x)				x	x	
- Faroes (x)					x		
Finland	x		x	x+	x	x	x
Iceland	x		x	x	x	x	x
Norway	x	x	x	x+	x	x	x
Russia	x	x	x	x+	x		x
Sweden	x		x	x+	x	x	x
USA	x	x	x				
(EU)				x	x		x

KEY TO INSTITUTIONS:

AEPS/AC = Arctic Council

Ilulissat = Ministerial meetings of the five littoral states of the Arctic Ocean

IASC = International Arctic Science Committee

BEAC = Barents Euro-Arctic Council (x+ = country sharing in the rotating chairmanship)

CBSS = Council of Baltic Sea States

NC(M) = Nordic Council / Nordic Council of Ministers

ND = EU's Northern Dimension

(Where not separately marked, Greenland and the Faroes are represented through the Kingdom of Denmark)

Against this background, there is a clear international interest in documenting and better understanding how the states most affected are approaching their policy choices and preparing for future scenarios. It is natural to look first and foremost at the five littoral states that possess substantial territories within the Arctic Circle, not least as most of them have tabled or will table claims for the further utilization of natural resources of the Arctic Ocean's seabed beyond their Exclusive Economic Zones (e.g. Koivurova 2010). These five states have held two publicly advertised meetings, at Ilulissat (Greenland) in 2008 and at Chelsea (Canada) in 2010, to discuss their special shared concerns; and have issued one widely noted joint policy declaration (see Ilulissat Declaration)¹⁰. However, the other three Nordic members of the Arctic Council resent what they see as an inner cabal and have pressed for such matters to be determined by the Council's full membership in future. The EU, by definition, would also like to see a more inclusive approach to the management of the High North that would let it take a permanent observer's seat on the Arctic Council – thus far resisted by Canada and Russia – and would offer all its members a possible place in regional development.

These sometime contentious institutional issues explain why the national and institutional Arctic strategy documents to be studied here do not limit themselves to identifying concrete threats and opportunities, and discussing substantive solutions. All devote some space to the “how” and the “who” of Arctic management, taking a position on what general governance principles should be fol-

¹⁰ The Ilulissat Declaration (2008) was signed on the 28th of May 2008 by Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the USA. These five states had actually held one separate meeting of civil servants already before 2008, but without publicity or policy statements.

lowed and what institutions – or in practice, what combinations of them – should be used for the purpose. Many also pay attention to what might be called vertical governance issues of inhabitants’ rights, information and transparency. It can easily be understood that they have become much more than ‘diplomatic’ documents, covering as they do agendas that are internal to their own territories as much as external, and seeking to communicate with their own populations as well as the audience abroad. To help understand each of the resulting products, the central and main section of this paper provides relevant national – and in the EU’s case, institutional – background before picking out and analysing the most significant and revealing features of the strategies themselves.

Before moving to this catalogue, however, there are two more general aspects of the framework needing to be explored. Firstly, what theory or theories of international affairs can be seen reflected in, or may be tested by, the phenomena to be discussed in this article? Secondly, what is the nature of a “strategy” document in modern international affairs and state politics, and how far can its contents be relied on as a true reflection of belief and intent?

I.1 Theoretical framework(s)

The theory of Realism has been commonly viewed as the classic and dominant framework for academic analysis of International Relations (IR) (Dunne and Schmidt, 2001). It is a cluster of theories rather than a single creed but, broadly speaking, depicts states as the main actors in the system and as unitary constructs competing to enhance their shares of a fixed sum of power and security. It assumes an anarchic global environment where no law other than

that of the strongest can be relied on, and where force – especially military force – is often the most powerful argument. As further developed through the variant of Neo-realism, the theory does allow for states to make use of multilateral institutions where this appears to offer them a net benefit, but regards the institutions as contingent entities that cannot survive or act beyond what states wish them to do – not least since they can only use states' own resources for enforcement (e.g. Waltz 1993).

Several features of the Arctic/High North region would point towards the validity of these theories. They include most obviously the emphasis on defining and enforcing the application of state sovereignty;¹¹ the related territorial claims of a set of more-or-less powerful states; the preparations many of them appear to be making to have military options in hand for the purpose;¹² the linkage between control of natural resources and national strength and status; and the absence of a single competent and compelling institutional frame. States' behaviour, and the trend of state politics in picking and choosing among the institutional or legal options that do exist, also fit well – at least, at first sight – with the theoretical vision of state-institution relations offered by Neo-realism. Several existing analyses of Arctic politics have in fact probed states' choices within this interpretative framework (e.g. Ingimundarson, 2011a), while other research endeavours (including a very large, multi-sectoral research programme sponsored by the Norwegian state¹³)

11 On the importance of sovereignty in realist world-views see (Morgenthau, 2006).

12 For details see (Wezeman, 2012), although this analysis concludes that current military upgrades are modest and could also be explained by national policing/patrolling needs.

13 The reference is to GEOPOLITIKK-NORD, a programme led by the Institute of Defence Studies at Oslo: see the website <http://www.geopoliticsnorth.org/>.

use the connected term of Geopolitics. Geopolitics, with its primary schools of thought – Classical, New and Critical Geopolitics – can be defined as an approach to International Relations as well as (political) geography that looks for links and causal relationships between geographical space, and political (state-based) power and control (Østerud, 1988). Since in the Arctic region all primary schools of thought within Geopolitics are applicable (e.g. Heininen, 2010a), this conceptual framework may be used to analyse the region as a physical space with changing (geo)strategic importance, and simultaneously as an arena for interaction between national, regional and international powers as well as non-state actors.

However, in recent years a growing number of thinkers have judged Realism inadequate as an explanation of 21st century conditions, and/or have found its “Neo-“ versions to be stretched so far that they can no longer be clearly separated from alternatives such as liberal institutionalism. Common sense, also, suggests that a picture as complicated as that of the High North today is unlikely to be captured by any single theory. Accordingly, this paper will aim among other things to *explore and test* the applicability of classic state-centric, balance-of-power approaches to the case in hand. We shall ask what features of state and institutional strategies, with their driving motivations, can indeed be best explained by competitive geopolitical and geo-economic interests and – in some cases – also by top-down nation-building concerns. At the same time we may highlight aspects of declared strategy and actual behaviour that do not fit Realist models (especially the older ones), and which may point – at the least – to nations’ wish to explore more genuinely cooperative approaches as at least part of their armoury. It is also reasonable to hypothesize that different Arctic states’ policy choices

and objectives will adopt a more, or less, Realist mode depending on these states' actual power and their relative vulnerability to the effects of anarchic competition. Findings on this aspect of the comparative analysis will be set out as part of the concluding section.

1.2 What is a “strategy”?

As the name and/or nature of a “strategy” is common to all the documents to be compared in more detail in this study,¹⁴ it is important to be clear on what exactly that term implies in early 21st-century usage. It has evolved a great deal since historical times when it was limited to the military sphere – the sphere of action of a “strategos”, or general – and denoted a plan or set of goals that stretched widely over space and time, as distinct from short-term “tactics” or specific, concrete “operations”. Nowadays, not just states and multilateral institutions but business corporations, social groupings and individuals can talk of having a “strategy” for achieving their aims, in virtually any field of human endeavour. They may formulate several different kinds of “strategies” at one time, for instance a fundraising strategy, public relations strategy, recruitment or succession strategy. In all such usages a relatively long-term and coherent plan is implied, but otherwise the ‘strategy’ word has been stretched and

¹⁴ The Icelandic strategy (see below) is a composite rather than a single document: it started with a governmental “Report” of 2010 on sustainable development in the Arctic, but the policy principles of a national “strategy” were then proposed by the government and endorsed in a parliamentary resolution. EU nomenclature has been ambivalent: the European Commission in its proposals of November 2008 for a concerted European Union approach towards the High North used the “strategy” word, but when the EU Council of Ministers issued their first guidelines in December 2009 on the basis of this document, they shifted to the more modest appellation of a “policy”. (Full document references are below.)

diluted very far from its classic meaning: military affairs, and international power relations for that matter are rarely involved at all (Bailes 2009a).

The national and institutional Arctic “strategies” to be examined here fall somewhere in between the classic, and the looser contemporary, definitions of the word. They echo tradition insofar as they cover a field of international relations where military force is not entirely out of the picture, and where military assets might also be used in a variety of more “peaceful” ways (for instance for search and rescue, data acquisition and monitoring). Part at least of the policy challenge they address involves calculating one’s position in relation to other “powers” – albeit now including non-state, and collective institutional, powers as well as classic national ones. Like earlier military strategies, these documents are about mapping future uncertainties and preparing both guidelines and instruments to deal with them. They are designed not just to inform, but to mobilize, steer and coordinate the national or multi-state communities that they cover. However, at least two features of these papers strike a more modern note, and offer significant new angles for analysis. One is the wide range of the substantive issues they cover – reflected in Table 3, though this lists only the major and most easily comparable items. The other, with implications not yet fully explored by research, is their role as public documents.

TABLE 3. PRIORITIES / PRIORITY AREAS
OR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ARCTIC/NORTHERN STRATEGIES

	<u>Sov/Sec</u>	<u>Econ/Trans</u>	<u>Envir</u>	<u>Man/Res</u>	<u>Human/Ind</u>	<u>Scie</u>
Canada	x	x	x	x		
KingdomDK	x	x	x	x	x	x
Finland	/x	x/x	x	(x)	/x	
Iceland	/x	x/x	x	x/x	x	x
Norway	x	x	x	x/x	/x	x
Russia	x	x/x		x/x	/x	(x)
Sweden	/x	x	x	/x	x/x	(x)
USA	x	x/x	x	x/x		x
EU		x	x	x	x	

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS:

Sov = Sovereignty

Sec = Comprehensive security

Econ = Economic development,
i.e. utilization of natural resources

Trans = Transportation

Envir = Environment

Man = Management and governance

Res = Rescue and search

Human = Human dimension incl. people

Ind = Indigenous peoples

Scie = Science, knowledge and
scientific cooperation

On the first point, the definition of «security» in common public usage (not only in scientific writings) has evolved rapidly since the end of the Cold War in particular, and now covers a great deal more than military defence (e.g. Heininen 2010b). Within Europe the trend has been especially clearly reflected in collective, institu-

tional «security strategies» adopted by members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE, 2003), and by members of the EU (European Council, 2003 and European Council of Ministers, 2008). These documents put little emphasis on the risks of state-to-state war but all the more on internal conflict, as a hazard for the state affected and a major concern for the international community. They further identify non-warlike forms of aggressive human behaviour that challenge both state and society: terrorism, violent crime, new forms of sabotage such as cyber-attacks, piracy, and in the worst case private access to weapons of mass destruction. They go on to list unintentional or «natural» security problems caused by accidents, infrastructure breakdowns, interruption of energy and other vital supplies, individual natural disasters, human and animal epidemics, ecological damage and the longer term effects of climate change. Each of these topics can be defined as a specialized dimension or branch of «security» (food security, health security, cyber-security, etc), but they can also clearly be inter-related through chains of causation in normal times and ‘domino effects’ in an acute crisis. Concepts have duly been developed that link a varied set of security aspects together in order, ideally, to allow comprehensive policy prescriptions to be made for combating them. Thus at global level, the UN endorses the notion of ‘human security’ (as developed in UNDP, 2004), while in Northern Europe nations like Norway and Sweden have adopted a doctrine of ‘societal security’ (see e.g. Burgess and Mouhle, 2007) allowing all hazards, other than traditional war, to be assessed and prepared for through new governmental coordinating structures (Bailes, 2009a).

As all members of the Arctic Council also belong to the OSCE and three of them to the EU, it is not surprising that they have

adopted the same broad, multi-functional approach to threat and risk analysis – and have shown a preoccupation with coordination of responses – in any overall national «strategies» adopted lately.¹⁵ A similar complex approach is naturally reflected in their Arctic or High North strategies, further justified by the objective plurality of local security challenges. Beyond these broad similarities, however, it will be interesting to note exactly what mixture of risks, threats, and positive opportunities each strategy document identifies; whether and how these dimensions are prioritized; and how far the ‘strategy’ itself and its prescriptions rises to the challenge of creating integrated policy approaches and the tools for possible complex emergencies.¹⁶

All these remarks so far imply, however, that what is said in a strategy may be read directly as a statement of belief and intent: and this is far from self-evident. The fact that these documents are drafted and designed to be published, where a traditional military strategy would have been most effective when kept most secret, fundamentally alters the nature and balance of their function. They are deliberately sending a message to both internal and external audiences: a message that starts with the very act of adopting a strategy at a given time. The latter conveys the importance of a topic, brands it as an issue of public and cross-governmental concern, and also

15 The best known of these are national strategies issued by the USA and Russian Federation; Nordic nations do not normally produce a single security/defence ‘strategy’ under their name, though Finland’s and Denmark’s periodic Defence Reports come close to it in function (Bailes 2009a).

16 This paper will not dwell on the question of which issues in the strategies are explicitly defined as ‘security’ ones, and why. That would be an interesting enquiry itself but would need to be approached in the light of ‘securitization’ theory, probing especially into who decides on and ‘owns’ such definitions, and what impact such choices have on general values of governance.

imposes a certain definition of what the topic is – *vide* the role (described above) of recent general security strategies in shifting the discourse of “security” itself away from Cold-War assumptions. For a domestic audience the strategy conveys the government’s awareness and resolve, and beyond this reassuring effect it may also be designed more materially to promote consensus in previously disputed or ‘grey’ areas and to mobilize actors for specific ends. Towards the outside world, the style and content of the strategy will also normally be designed for positive effect: to show that a nation has reformed and renewed itself (many recent national strategies have been adopted after a regime change), to signal acceptance of relevant international norms, to attract support or sympathy and reach out for like-minded partnerships. It could, however, also be meant as a deterrent or warning message about the seriousness a government attaches to its national interests in the given field, and its ability to muster the necessary resources and domestic support to defend them. It may even have an element of hostile misinformation, drawing attention away from aspects of the given policy, or even some other policy, that the owners find it convenient to conceal for the moment

Once such presentational considerations start affecting the drafting of a strategy, it is clear that the text will be shifted away and perhaps far away from what the government (or other initiator) ‘really’ thinks, or plans, or is really capable of doing at a given time. Institutional strategies in particular are often intended as rallying calls, inspiring visions, and hopefully self-fulfilling prophecies rather than a bald statement of what can and will be done. They are further pushed towards an ideal blandness by the need to preserve

consensus and to evade divisive or embarrassing issues.¹⁷ More subtly, the published strategy of a nation (especially a small-to-medium one) may be influenced unconsciously as well as consciously by external models and examples – like the models of the EU and NATO, for countries wishing to join them – with which the drafters see merit and profit in identifying themselves; or which perhaps fill gaps in their own knowledge, experience, and national research and assessment tools. There are fashions in international policy making and terminology, as in everything else, that find echoes in the majority of public documents issued at any given time and which might easily trick the observer into seeing signs of unity, where no substantive underpinning exists. Finally, since both the calculation of presentational advantage versus honesty, and the susceptibility to external pressures and fashions, are characteristic of a limited official/intellectual elite, a strategy designed to please the world may no longer be meaningful or even intelligible for the domestic audience. The resulting alienation and lack of real national ‘ownership’ can be charted by, for instance, opinion polls that contrast people’s grass-roots attitude on a given question with what the official strategy says.¹⁸

In the present context, it is not hard to imagine any and all of these

17 A good example is the EU Security Strategy of December 2003 referred to above, which mentions Russia only briefly and positively, skates over the divisive aspects of US-Europe relations, and completely leaves out Iraq.

18 Perhaps the best example is the majority anti-EU sentiment often found in states (including Nordic ones) where the government publicly affirms EU membership as vital for national strategic as well as other practical purposes. Sweden and Iceland have both had public approval rates lower than 30% while their governments were actively negotiating for EU membership. For further discussion of all points in this section see (Bailes, 2009a).

factors applying to the Arctic nations – and the EU – as they set out to draft Arctic/High North strategies in the specific conditions of the early 21st century. As a final complication: depending on time sequence, the production of one strategy may be prompted by another, causing it to be cast at least partly as an ‘answer’ to the previous one. This was the case with the Arctic strategy of Sweden, as the last Arctic state to formulate its national agenda and public policy on the Arctic. All these insights may be applied while reviewing the details of strategies set out in the next section, and the general topic of ‘trustworthiness’ of strategies will be reverted to in the conclusions.

II. THE STRATEGIES

As mentioned earlier all the Arctic states – Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the USA – have recently (in the period 2008-2011) approved their agendas and strategies depicting national priorities, priority areas and policy objectives on their own Northernmost parts as well as the entire Arctic region. In the European Union, the European Commission's paper of November 2008 proposing priorities for an EU strategy was followed by initial Council conclusions and mandates in 2009, with the results due to be reviewed in late 2012 on the base of an officials' progress report.

This section consists of a short inventory of these strategies and state policies, as well as the EU developments, with an emphasis on each document's origins, the priorities it defines, and other key observations. Details of the strategies are drawn from the inventory and comparative study carried out for the Northern Research Forum by Heininen (2011), updated as necessary. The nations are here listed according to the chronological order in which they first adopted a document defined as an official strategy, or the equivalent. Each national sub-section starts with a brief introduction and background to the history of the given country's Arctic/High Northern policy and agenda. The main content and the priorities or priority areas of each published strategy are then summarized and

followed by a discussion on relevant and interesting findings. The final sub-section on the EU is structured in a corresponding way.

II.1 Norway

Norway's policy in the Arctic region and northern affairs was first fully defined in "The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway 2006), launched in December 2006. As the first such document to be published under the name of "strategy", it has served to an extent as a model or at least a reference point for all others. It focuses on long-term predictability and perspective, with the keywords of presence, activity and knowledge, and a particular emphasis on strengthening the cooperation with Russia and increasing Russia's engagement. A revised version, titled "New Building Blocks in the North" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway 2009) was launched in March 2009; it largely continues the chosen policy features, but with a focus on business development, and on knowledge and the environment. Here both versions, the 2006 Strategy and the 2009 Strategy, are used as the principal references.

The 2009 Strategy, continuing the main policy lines of its predecessor, defines seven priority aims: first, to develop knowledge about climate change and the environment in the High North; second, to improve monitoring, emergency (and oil spill) response and maritime safety systems in northern waters; third, to promote sustainable use (and business activities) of off-shore petroleum and renewable marine resources; fourth, to promote on-shore business (and industry) development in the North; fifth, to further-develop the infrastructure in the North; sixth, to continue to exercise sov-

ereignty firmly and strengthen cross-border cooperation (with Russia) in the North; and finally, to safeguard the cultures and livelihoods of indigenous peoples.

Background

Norway was the first country in the 21st century to start work on an explicit Arctic strategy and policy, starting with the expert report “Mot nord! Utfordringer og muligheter I nordområdene” – Northward! Challenges and opportunities in the high North (Statens forvaltningstjeneste Informasjonsforvaltning 2003). “The Norwegian Government’s High North Strategy” was launched in December 2006 by the Stoltenberg government, signalling a shift towards the recognition of the High North as a leading and indeed primary Norwegian strategic concern.

Accordingly, the 2006 Strategy defines the High North as the Norwegian Government’s main area of focus. The document itself is robust, with attention being placed on topics related to environment, humans, foreign policy, business, knowledge, and indigenous peoples. Within these sections are a number of policies, promises and intentions for the Government of Norway to follow. It is clear that in making High North the focal area of interest, the Government expects a commitment from all levels and sectors of government and engagement by the country as a whole. Perhaps the most progressive part of the text is Norway’s focus on Russia, and the Strategy includes several different references to plans for building and engaging the Russian partners. By focussing on Russia, Norway is clearly defining the importance of the relationship in terms of regional security, economic growth and environmental management. This objective took a major stride forward in September 2010, when

Norway and Russia reached agreement on a Treaty of Maritime Delimitation and Cooperation in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean (Treaty between the Kingdom of Norway and the Russian Federation 2010; also Boswell 2010).¹⁹

The analysis in the Norwegian High North Strategy focuses on foreign affairs and international cooperation, which are the most relevant and interesting indicators from the point of view of this inventory. The foreword and summary also pick out priorities from other sections, as well as the framework through which the 2006 Strategy will be implemented. Correspondingly, the 2009 Strategy, *New Building Blocks in the North* outlines a set of follow-up measures and new steps to be taken within the main political priority areas (of the 2006 Strategy). The 2009 Strategy also takes a broader view of the High North, defined to include the whole Circumpolar Arctic. Finally, the 2009 Strategy was updated and concretized with figures of allocated budget money in a status report by the Foreign Ministry in October 2010 (Utenriksdepartementet 2010).

Relevant and interesting findings – discussion

First, the Norwegian High North Strategy is comprehensive and includes many fields of politics, issues and strategic areas with concrete goals relating both to internal and external affairs. To a greater extent than usually found in foreign policy documents, it constitutes an advanced strategy with a complete follow-up system for furthering long-term Norwegian policy in the North, specifically endorsed by the (current) government coalition. Furthermore, the

19 The Maritime Delimitation Treaty between Norway and Russia was approved on the 8th of February 2011 by the Storting of Norway (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press release 8.2.2011).

High North is accorded a place “at the top” as the most important strategic priority area of Norway, given its growing importance for Norway as a whole. This makes the High North Strategy an important component in Norwegian national policy overall.

Second, the Strategy uses consistently and stubbornly the term, “the High North” (rather than Arctic). In the 2006 Strategy the High North is described as a “broad concept both geographically and politically” (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006, 13), though it more properly refers to the Barents Sea and the surrounding areas, including Svalbard. While the 2009 Strategy claims that ‘the High North’ is without a precise definition in Norwegian usage, the horizon of the term is explicitly “broader than Northern Norway and Svalbard since Norway has major interests to safeguard in a greater region”. This is claimed to be “really a Norwegian perspective” (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009, 50).²⁰

Third, the Norwegian Government has built its High North Strategy on the general perception that the main feature of the geopolitics of the Arctic region in the early 21st century is stability and peaceful cooperation. Norway does not anticipate a ‘race’ for energy resources, nor emerging conflicts or “the return to a cold war”, even if Russia has increased its military activities in the Arctic (e.g. Faremo 2010). Therefore, it makes great sense to emphasize the development of knowledge, to promote sustainable use of natural resources and business, and to maintain state sovereignty by strengthening cross-border cooperation (with Russia) in the North.

Fourth, based on and following from this, it is not surprising that perhaps the most progressive part of the High North Strategy

20 It is also said that “the High North is gradually becoming more synonymous with the Arctic” (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009, 50).

– particularly in the 2006 version – is Norway’s focus on Russia and cooperation with Russia. Objectives in that regard are numerous, ambitious and concrete. In several places, for example, references are made to how Norway plans to build on and engage its Russian partners. The text is progressive, almost aggressive, at times in the way it calls on an active Russian participation in cooperation. This can be seen as a continuation of the major shift in Norwegian foreign policy starting in the early 1990s – after the end of the Cold War period and the collapse of the Soviet Union – towards decreasing military tension and increasing stability by direct cross-border cooperation in the European North. These goals were pursued for example by establishing the Barents Euro-Arctic Region between the Nordic countries and Russia, and by bilateral functional cooperation with Russia. As a consequence, active relations and a new kind of confidence have been built between the former enemies, culminating most recently in the aforementioned Treaty on offshore delimitation in the Barents Sea. This amounts to a remarkable success story in international politics (e.g. Heininen 2010a). One reflection of this strong Russia focus is that in the Norwegian strategy documents, Nordic countries and other Northern regions connected with the Norwegian High North seem almost forgotten²¹.

Fifth, the Government also aims to develop marine industries and business activities, particularly petroleum-based business activities, and therefore defines “the High North as a (new) petroleum province” where sustainable use of off-shore petroleum and renewable marine resources is to be promoted in cooperation with Russia (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009, 18). Norway also

21 For example, neither the other Nordic countries nor Nordic cooperation in general are mentioned in the main political priorities, objectives or specific actions of the Strategy.

proclaims its determination to be “the best steward of resources in the High North” (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006, 13 and 55). The broader framework for these aims is provided by energy security, on which the Strategy states that globally “energy is becoming more clearly defined as a part of security policy”, and further that “it is clear that climate change will have an impact on the security of countries and people all over the world” (ibid, 14).

Sixth, by focussing on (North-West) Russia, Norway is clearly defining the importance of regional cooperation and region-building, as well as business development, in foreign and security policy as a means towards comprehensive security, economic growth, environmental management and knowledge-building. Further, issues concerning northern indigenous peoples and especially their cultures and livelihoods are among the main priorities. Here the term “indigenous peoples” is used along with, or even more than, the term “Saami”.

Seventh and as a key point, the High North Strategy reflects a high level of continuity in long-term Norwegian policy in the High North, meaning the Barents Sea region. The most strategic element is Norway’s focus on Russia and an active engagement of Russia’s participation in bilateral cooperation. However, a clear underlying value is the strengthening of Norway’s state sovereignty in the High North, particularly as regards maritime sovereignty around the waters of Svalbard in the context of (potential) jurisdiction disputes. This is evident from statements such as “large parts of the Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea are under Norwegian fisheries jurisdiction”, or the pledge that Norway will maintain its “presence

on the islands of Jan Mayen, Björnöya and Hopen” as well as at Svalbard itself (ibid, 31-32).

Finally as conclusion, the Norwegian High North Strategy not only highlights the relationship between Norway and Russia and the goal of further improving those relations, but can be seen as an important means to achieving such a goal in itself. This specific instrumental focus limits the extent to which the Strategy can be seen as a broad and objective response to the newest significant geopolitical and environmental changes in the Arctic region.

II.2 Denmark/Greenland/Faroes

Updating an initial document of May 2008, the current version of “*The Kingdom of Denmark’s Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020*” was adopted by the Government of Denmark, the Government of the Faroes and the Government of Greenland and launched by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in August 2011. According to the Strategy document, the Kingdom of Denmark “in an equal partnership between the three parts of the Danish Realm” – Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands – will work for “A peaceful, secure and safe Arctic; with self-sustaining growth and development; with respect for the Arctic’s fragile climate; and in close cooperation with our international partners” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2011, 10-11).

Background

The primary focus of the 2011 Strategy is indeed on Copenhagen’s relations with Greenland and the devolution of responsibilities and authorities. In this it resembles the previous joint draft strategy of

Denmark and Greenland published in 2008: “*The Arctic at a Time of Transition: Draft Strategy for Activities in the Arctic Region*” (Naminersornerullutik Oqartussat, Udenrigsministeriet, Maj 2008) – which set out a twofold objective for further work: first, supporting and strengthening Greenland’s development towards increased autonomy; and second, maintaining the Kingdom’s position as a major player in the Arctic. The 2008 document was based on the work of the joint Greenlandic-Danish Working Group for an Arctic Strategy initiated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Per Stig Möller and the Minister Member for Finance and Foreign Affairs, Johan Motzfeldt in August 2006 (ibid, 43).

Though the 2008 draft Strategy did deal with foreign policy issues, it also – for the first time in Greenlandic-Danish involvement with the Arctic – clearly emphasized the domestic model through which Denmark and Greenland were to share their interests and duties. The idea for a comprehensive and active strategy came from the need to balance Greenland’s emerging autonomy and stronger legal status with the stresses placed on it from outside sources. Indeed, in 2009 Greenland achieved a stronger legal status of Self-Government, making the Home Rule Government of Greenland – established in 1979 – a unique form of governance with a growing level of self-determination (Loukacheva 2008). This was accepted in a national referendum in Greenland in November 2008. Already in 1985 the status of the Home Rule Government was strong enough to authorize a referendum by which Greenland opted to withdraw from the European Union (which it had joined in 1973 along with Denmark).

Following this withdrawal, the EU granted Greenland the same status as other Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) of Mem-

ber States (e.g. Airoidi 2008, 93-96). From that time relations between the Union and Greenland have been strained particularly due to disagreements concerning sealing and trade in arctic wildlife products, but also climate change and international climate policy, and exploitation of hydrocarbons. However, the EU has recognized Greenland as a relevant Arctic actor through, for example, the Greenlandic initiative on the 'Arctic Window' within the EU's Northern Dimension policy and the Commission's proposal for enhancing "Arctic-related cooperation with Greenland" in its Communication on the Arctic Region (Commission of the European Communities 2008, 12).

Denmark/Greenland's action in hosting the Ilulissat Polar Sea Conference of five Arctic littoral states in May 2008, and the release of the draft joint strategy, were surely linked by more than coincidence. The signing of the Ilulissat Declaration for the first time set on public record the shared intentions and principles of the five states concerned in pursuing their responsibilities and aims: and – on paper at least – its emphasis on peaceful, law-abiding approaches and environmental responsibility were highly favourable for a smaller player like Denmark. Despite the annoyance of the non-invited states, the Ilulissat meeting can be considered by the littoral states not only a success in Arctic diplomacy, but a milestone in modern Arctic cooperation – though the three 'left-overs' and Northern Indigenous peoples do not share the interpretation. The national Danish strategy released later in the same month not surprisingly picked up the declaration's theme of international and cross-sectoral collaboration.

The Kingdom of Denmark's chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2009-2011 – highlighting peoples (of the Arctic), the IPY legacy,

climate change, biodiversity, megatrends (in the Arctic), integrated resource management, operational co-operation and the AC in a “new geopolitical framework” – had the underlying motive of consolidating Denmark’s position as an important international actor (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2009). A further aim was, and remains, to have Greenland’s evolution to territorial autonomy recognized globally as an achievement in terms of indigenous rights, rather than a Danish exit from the Arctic arena. Parallel to this, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs made it known in September 2010 that it would produce a new Arctic strategy with updated objectives, this time covering Denmark and the Faroe Islands²² as well as Greenland (Udenrigsministeriet 2010). In August 2011, the Foreign Ministry duly launched The Kingdom of Denmark’s Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020 with the purpose of focusing “attention on the Kingdom’s strategic priorities for future development in the Arctic towards 2020” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2011, 11). To ensure implementation, it was stated that the Kingdom would set up a cross-disciplinary steering committee for the Strategy, carry out a mid-term evaluation of the Strategy, and start to prepare a further up-dated strategy (in 2018-2019).

Relevant and interesting findings – discussion

First, the Kingdom of Denmark has recently had an active and effective impact on the Arctic region, particularly through Greenland, as already presaged in the joint Greenlandic-Danish (draft) strategy of 2008. The strategy approved in 2008, which can now be taken as au-

22 Interestingly, however the Faroese Home Rule Government set up a working party in 2011 to reflect further on what distinct interests the Faroe Islands might have in the Arctic context.

thoritative, is comprehensive and includes all relevant sectors and fields in substantial detail. Both in the 2011 Strategy and the 2008 joint draft, the focus is very much on Copenhagen's relations with Greenland and the devolution of responsibilities and competences. Beyond this, the aim of the latest Strategy is twofold: first, to react and respond to the major ongoing environmental and geopolitical change(s) in, and growing global interest toward, the Arctic; and second, to redefine a (new) position of the Kingdom of Denmark and strengthen its status as a player in the Arctic (it makes sense to use the "Kingdom of Denmark" rather than "Denmark" in Arctic affairs).

Second, in spite of old "skeletons in the closet", the US-Danish Defence Agreement (of 1951) providing for the continuing US presence in Greenland was referred to in positive terms in the 2008 joint strategy as a means of maintaining a visible presence for Greenland's defence; and there was mention of upgrading the Thule Radar Station according to the Danish-Greenlandic-US agreement from 2004. This three-way agreement and the treatment of the issue in the joint strategy reflect one aspect of an interesting development, whereby the Home Rule Government of Greenland has demanded to have a say in "hard" issues. This was achieved *de facto* when Copenhagen permitted the Home Rule Government to take a lead in negotiations on fisheries with the European Union, and when Greenland and Denmark jointly negotiated with the US on Thule (Olsen 2010). The 2011 strategy emphasizes the importance of sovereignty and national security, as do those of the other littoral states; but it is also the only one (of the set examined here) to em-

phasize the importance of NATO and the cooperation between the “Arctic 5”. Also the importance of UNCLOS is stressed.

Third, in addition to fisheries the Strategy strongly emphasises “new” economic activities and industries in the Arctic including hydropower, mining, tourism, and exploration for hydrocarbons and other minerals. Here the strategy can be seen as a means to attract industries to come, particularly to Greenland, and invest to these activities. While exploitation of offshore fossil fuels and other energy resources is viewed as critical to Greenland’s development, the use of renewable resources is also emphasized. Further, the 2011 Strategy, like the earlier Denmark/Greenland draft strategy, recognizes a clear connection between climate change and increased accessibility and opportunities for exploration. Interestingly, it emphasizes the Arctic’s vulnerable climate: whereas the draft strategy said that climate change “will increase accessibility and opportunities for exploration”, the final strategy is a bit more sophisticated and stresses the need for further knowledge and knowledge building on climate change and its impacts.

Fourth, while strengthening cooperation in the Arctic Council is mentioned as a goal in the Strategy, the “Polar Sea Conference in 2008” and the role of the “Arctic 5” are also emphasized. Denmark for its part clearly saw the Ilulissat initiative as a success in relations between the littoral states and a milestone in Arctic cooperation. The subsequent strategy documents reflect this assessment and support the Kingdom of Denmark’s leading role and position as a permanent Arctic player, albeit in a context of power-sharing with Greenland. This point of view is strongly present in the 2011 Strategy document.

Fifth, already in the 2008 draft Strategy it was stated that political

globalization is a reality which “requires a comprehensive strategy for effective representation of interests” (Namminersornerullutik Oqartussat/Udenrigsministeriet 2008, 7). The final strategy adopts an even clearer world-wide, global perspective, when it states that “The Arctic in recent years has become a central location on the world map”, and consequently, aims “to strengthen the Kingdom’s status as a global player in the Arctic” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2011, 11).

To conclude: the primary aim of the 2011 Strategy is undoubtedly to strengthen Greenland’s new position as a self-governing entity while (re)defining the Kingdom of Denmark’s own role in the Arctic as a “global player”; and second, based on this, to respond to the ongoing significant environmental, geo-economic and geopolitical change(s) in, and growing global interest toward, the Arctic region.

II.3 The Russian Federation

The Arctic policy of the Russian Federation, “*Fundamentals of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic in the Period up to 2020 and Beyond*”, was adopted by President D. Medvedev in September 2008 and made public in 2009 (Rossiyskaya Gazeta, March 30 2009).

The strategic priorities of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic (up to 2020 and beyond) are: first, to carry out an active interaction of Russia with the sub-Arctic states with a view to delimiting maritime areas on the basis of norms of international law; second, to create a uniform Arctic search and rescue regime and prevention of man-caused accidents; third, to strengthen bilateral

relationships within the framework of regional organizations, such as the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council; fourth, to assist in the organization, management and effective use of cross-polar air routes and the Northern Sea Route for international navigation; fifth, to actively contribute to international Arctic forums through the Russia-European Union partnerships; sixth, to delimit maritime spaces in the Arctic Ocean and maintain a mutually advantageous presence of Russia in the Spitsbergen archipelago; seventh, to improve state management of the social and economic development of the Arctic, e.g. by increasing support for scientific research; eighth, to improve the quality of life for indigenous peoples and their social and economic activities; ninth, to develop the Arctic resource base through improved technological capabilities; and tenth, to modernize and develop the infrastructure of the Arctic transport system and fisheries in the Russian Arctic.

Background

In October 1987, a speech by the then-Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev (1987) in Murmansk gave the initial impetus for the current intergovernmental cooperation in the Arctic. It outlined six proposals; two of them were concerned with confidence building, arms control and disarmament, whereas the remaining four were concerned with civil cooperation²³. The speech was an early indicator of a change in the closed nature of the Soviet North and represented an important turning point for the entire Arctic. It led to a

23 The speech outlined six proposals: The first two were about establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in northern Europe and reducing military activities. The others discussed confidence-building measures in northern seas, civilian cooperation in developing natural resources, coordination of scientific research, cooperation in environmental protection, and the opening of the Northern Sea Route to foreign ships (Gorbachev 1987).

significant geopolitical change and the start of broad international northern cooperation, including the creation of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in 1991. (e.g. Heininen 2004)

This development was a response to the following factors: first, since most of the seven federal districts and 83 subjects, i.e. regions, of the Russian Federation cover Northern regions, the entire North is important in the Russian context, and was very important as part of the modernisation campaign during the Soviet era (e.g. Helanterä-Tynkkynen 2003). Second, due to minerals, oil and gas drilling as well as all the investments of the Soviet era, the North is still an important reserve and resource area for the whole Russian Federation. Further, it is strategically important from a military point of view. Third, interestingly the discourse is increasingly focusing on academic aspects including the need to create an academic network where the necessary redefinition of the role of the Russian North is addressed. This is a response to the current changes taking place in the Northern regions and the concern of its peoples not to be treated merely as a geo-strategically important resource reserve, 'the other'. New opportunities also now exist for more horizontal discussions and cooperation between the northern regions, rather than being tied within the rigidly sectoral academic structure of the Soviet Union, including the Soviet/Russian Academy of Science (RAS) with its many branches.

At the turn of the 21st century, Russian political discussions on West/EU-Russian relations including the EU's Northern Dimension were concerned with the role Russia might play in Northern (geo) politics (e.g. Sutyurin 2000). At the same time, as noted, there was a more academic discourse where the importance of redefining the role of the Russian North as more than a geo-strategically im-

portant resource reserve was addressed (e.g. Alekseyev 2001). There was also an interesting, though not well known, statement by President Putin, who mentioned the need for Russia to have a long-term Northern policy in his speech at the meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation in March 2004 (ITAR-TASS 2004). Although nothing tangible emerged at the political level before September 2008, Russia has continued its scientific expeditions in the Arctic (and the Antarctic); tens of them every year. As an example, such expeditions in 2007 included the North Pole-35 drift research station (supported by the Akademik Fedorov research vessel), the integrated high latitude Arctic Expedition (onboard the atomic icebreaker *Rossiya*), and the high latitude deepwater Arctic Expedition to the North Pole (IPY-2007/08 News, N 5-6, 2-6; IPY-2007/08 News, N 7, 2-12). The last one became a somewhat of an international public event and source of media hype, largely misunderstood and misinterpreted abroad. It illustrates how an activity that is basically scientific can be transformed into a highly (geo) political incident (e.g. Heininen 2010a).

In September of 2008 the newly-elected President Medvedev adopted an official state policy, *Fundamentals of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic in the Period up to 2020 and Beyond*. This was intended as a clear indication of national interests and basic objectives of the Russian Federation in the Arctic region, and of how Russia's state policy in the region should be developed (e.g. Lavrov 2009). The document was supported by guidelines adopted by Russia's Security Council on the same day. A number of publications released by the State Duma also helped prepare the way for the release of the September 2008 State Policy (see Lomagin 2008). The first was the *Russian Maritime Doctrine of 2001* which had four

broad objectives: guaranteeing free access to the Atlantic for Russian commercial fleets, access to natural resources within the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) (for example, in the Barents Sea), the strategic importance of security for Russia's Northern Fleet, and the importance of the Northern Sea Route for sustainable economic development of the State.

A second important document was the "*Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*", approved in July 2008, which re-introduced Russia as an energy super-power. The Concept carries more than just symbolic weight since it also stipulates the exact importance of the Arctic and its resources to fulfilling Russia's future economic plans, as well as the need for linking energy security with traditional forms of security. In July 2008 President Medvedev also signed a new Russian Law on Arctic Resources determining how the country's underwater arctic resources should be tapped, and naming the continental shelf of the Arctic Ocean as Russian national heritage. This followed from Russia's ratification of UNCLOS in 1997 and its scientific expedition to the bottom of the Arctic Ocean in August 2007, which was designed to gather evidence to support its submission of a proposal, or claim, to the shelf beyond current territorial limits.

A third document useful in understanding Russia's Arctic Policy is "*Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020*", which was released in May 2009. It has a much stronger conciliatory tone when compared to its previous versions. It also greatly expands the traditional concepts of security to include aspects of human and environmental security, and reaches into new ground by emphasizing Russia's continued commitment towards international law. Despite this last point, there remains an ominous sense of curiosity and anxious-

ness abroad about Russia's intentions in adhering to these policies, since an unfavourable verdict on its maritime delimitation could spark hostile and uncooperative reactions.

A fourth important document dealing with the Russian Arctic and North in general is the *"Energy Strategy of Russia For the Period up to 2030"* (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation 2010). It is a comprehensive and ambitious strategy with clear priorities and includes chapters on foreign energy policy and regional aspects and peculiarities of fuel and energy complex development. Finally, *"The Concept of Sustainable Development Of the Small-numbered Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East"* was adopted and released in February 2009.

In addition to these, Prime Minister Putin's speech of September 2010 at the international forum "The Arctic: Territory of Dialogue" in Moscow included another list of Russian top priorities (Putin 2010). The three priorities it defined are: first, "the creation of top-quality, comfortable living conditions for local people and the pursuit of a frugal attitude towards the indigenous and small Arctic nations' socio-economic infrastructure and traditions"; second, "[S]upport for new economic growth points and incentives for large-scale domestic and foreign investment", and exchange of ideas and innovations; and third, "[S]ubstantial investment in the scientific and nature-conservation infrastructure", which is intended to in-

clude cleaning-up all the garbage that has accumulated for decades on the tundra and in Arctic seas.²⁴

Relevant and interesting findings – discussion

First, it was not until the presidency of Medvedev (in 2008-2012) that the Russian Federation managed to formulate a comprehensive state policy in its Arctic Zone as well as for the entire region. Endorsed at the level of the highest authorities, the present Strategy will be implemented by way of three Action Plans. Thus, Russia has recovered and defined itself as an Arctic state, and in a sense is returning back to the Arctic region. The fact is, however, that even without the State Policy Russia is generally viewed as an Arctic nation, in some cases even ‘the’ Arctic nation.

Second, the new Arctic State Policy is strongly linked with, and supported by, other federal policies and strategies that treat the High Northern region as a strategic resource base for the whole Russian Federation. This is an important development in the context of the socio-economic gap traditionally existing within the Federation from North to South, and it suggests that one of the Strategy’s basic aims is to try to harmonize the interests of all federal subjects (and other actors) within a common national Arctic policy. In this light the State Policy may be seen as a pragmatic instrument both in terms of domestic politics and of the Federation’s development needs, with a particular view to the infrastructural challenges in the Russian Arctic and the out-of-date condition of elements such as

24 “...a serious spring-cleaning of our Arctic territories in the most direct sense of the word. I mean cleaning up the garbage that have been accumulating for decades around the cities, villages, mineral deposits, military bases, seaports, airfields, on the tundra, on the islands and in the Arctic Ocean” (Putin 2010).

the road network, airfields, harbors and fleets. Improvements are clearly needed, and of particular importance is the Northern Sea Route which has been given the status of a national passage and federal line of communications. Plans include the construction of ten permanent stations of the Russian Ministry for Emergency Situations along the Route, in cooperation with the Hydro-Meteorological Service. Here it is relevant to note that the economic crisis since 2008 seems not to have had any significant impact on Russia's policy in the Arctic, an example being the announcement on 27 March 2009 of the plan to create an Arctic Group of Forces as a part of Russia's strategy for Arctic exploration until 2020 (Lomagin 2010)²⁵.

Third, when it comes to detecting the real priorities of the Russian Federation in the Arctic, the State Policy document is not very helpful as so many priorities are included – altogether ten – all of which are called “strategic priorities”. Thus it comes as no surprise that several interpretations concerning the actual main priorities exist. An example would be Nikita Lomagin's (2008) short list: first, active extraction of natural resources; second, building transport, telecommunications and border infrastructure; and third, making the Arctic a primary strategic resource base of Russia. Then there is the above-mentioned interpretation by Minister Basargin that the State Policy includes three basic ideas (see Terva 2010). Perhaps the most recent list of Russian real “top priorities” in the Arctic can

25 The Forces would be readily deployable across the vast region and maintain interoperability with the general Russian armed forces, border guard and coast guard. Special ammunition, weaponry and transport would be designed for the ‘freezing temperature’ task force.

be found in Prime Minister Putin's 2010 above-mentioned speech with its three key points.

In this light, the primary objectives of the State Policy can be interpreted to be on one hand, stabilizing Russia's northern frontiers and guaranteeing the legal base for exploration of Arctic resources; and on the other hand, bridging the gap of socio-economic disparities between Russian Arctic regions and the rest of the country, paying special attention to indigenous populations and sustainable development. The tools for achieving these objectives will primarily involve bilateral and multilateral cooperation in areas that provide relatively speedy pay-offs and strengthens national security. All relevant federal ministries, regional authorities and academia are to be included in strategic planning for the Arctic and the appropriate financing will be provided by way of federal development programs (Lomagin 2008). More interestingly, the State Policy defines Russia's basic national interests in the Arctic very clearly. The Russian Arctic as a strategic resource base is seen as a prerequisite for solving challenges of social and economic development. To that end it is necessary to maintain the region as a "zone of peace and cooperation", preserve its unique ecological systems, and use the Northern Sea Route as a national transport link in the Arctic.

Fourth, given that delimitation of maritime spaces in the Arctic Ocean (and maintenance of a mutually advantageous presence of Russia in the Spitsbergen archipelago) is one of the strategic priorities of the State Policy, it is easier to understand why Norway and Russia were able to agree on the dispute of maritime borders in the Barents Sea, as mentioned earlier (Treaty between The Kingdom of Norway and The Russian Federation 2010).

Fifth, another interesting point is that the State Policy describes

the Arctic both as “a zone of peace and cooperation” and as “the sphere of military security” where Russia’s aims include the maintenance of a favorable operative regime, such as “a necessary fighting potential”. Such contradictions are also found in relation to the environment. Preservation of the environment is to take place while at the same time Russia is going to increase its military presence and arrange for ‘serious spring-cleaning’ in the Arctic territories of the Federation. Overall, however, and in spite of the discourse concerning the race for natural resources and emerging conflicts, as well as some negative Western readings and responses, the Russian State Policy in the Arctic seems to be largely aimed at maintaining stability and the peaceful cooperation already found in the region (also Putin 2010).

Sixth, in the State Policy the definition of the Arctic region includes only the five littoral states. International forums and regional organizations, such as the AC and the BEAC, and bilateral relations such as the Russia– EU partnership, are mentioned but not greatly emphasized.

To conclude, though the Russian State Policy in the Arctic can be interpreted as a response to the new geopolitical situation in the changing North, it is more a pragmatic instrument for the domestic politics of the Federation, designed to achieve President Putin’s primary aim – the stabilization of the Federation and its economy. Further, the Policy can be seen as part of a process through which

Russia is reasserting itself as a (regional) major power and a global energy player in world politics.

II.4 United States

The United States of America's document "National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD – 66" concerning an "Arctic Region Policy" was released on January 9, 2009 by President Bush's Administration (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary January 12, 2009). Based on the document the policy objectives / priority areas of the United States' Arctic Policy are first, national security and homeland security; second, international governance; third, extended continental shelf and boundary issues; fourth, promoting international scientific cooperation; fifth, maritime transportation; sixth, economic issues, including energy; and seventh, environmental protection and conservation of natural resources.

Background

The Arctic has not generally played an important role in US foreign or domestic policy, enjoying for instance a far lower relative priority in Washington than in Ottawa – an asymmetry that might explain some of the strains in US/Canada relations on the matter. One reason is that the US's Arctic territory is limited to the state of Alaska, which has so far enjoyed rather little prominence and influence either in Congress or in Administration circles. To the extent that Alaskan issues have been and are in the news, this is usually linked with policy decisions over oil and gas exploitation (for the whole nation's needs) together with related environmental hazards. After the Russian expedition to the North Pole in August 2007, however, some

US analysts testified before Congress that the US was falling behind Russia in the Arctic “race”. The US State Department responded in September 2008 by noting that Arctic countries use different criteria to define whether their territory is considered to be a part of the Arctic region or not²⁶.

The Clinton Administration had previously issued, but did not publicly circulate, US Arctic Policy Objectives in 1994 with the following six elements: protection of the Arctic environment, sustainable use of natural resources, strengthening of cooperative institutions among the Arctic states, involving Northern indigenous peoples in decision-making that affects them, enhancing scientific monitoring and research, and meeting post-Cold War national security and defence needs (Macnab 2009). In the early 21st century there were some lobbying efforts within the US by movements such as A Commonwealth North, the purpose of which was to emphasize that the United States needs “an Arctic agenda” and must understand its identity as “an Arctic nation”, too (Commonwealth North Study Report, May 2009).

In the event, the United States released its Arctic Region Policy on January 9, 2009,²⁷ just weeks before President George W. Bush’s second term concluded. Because of its bipartisan flavour, however, the document is still considered relevant for current and future administrations. This directive is said to supersede the “Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-26 (PDD-26, issued 1994) with respect to

26 It was stated that Russia as well as other Arctic states has “its rights to delineate an extended continental shelf so long as the outer limits are consistent with international law as supported by sound scientific data” (Lomagin 2008).

27 It is said to have been the outcome of “an extensive two-years consultation with a broad community of northern stakeholders” (Macnab 2009, 27).

Arctic policy but not Antarctic policy” (The White House 2009, 1). The updated document defines the Arctic as a much greater national interest for the United States than previously. In her interview in *Newsweek* (2009/2010, 26-30) Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also supported this view – she has taken a personal interest in the region, as demonstrated by her hosting of the joint Antarctic Treaty-Arctic Council meeting in 2009 and attendance at the Arctic Council Ministerial at Nuuk in 2011 – and called the Arctic a new emerging area in the US’ s foreign policy.

Relevant and interesting findings – discussion

First, the US Arctic Region Policy strongly emphasizes national and homeland security and borders, particularly in relation to maritime areas and including “(F)reedom of the seas” – a reference to the continuing dispute with Canada over navigation in the North-West Passage, which Washington defines as an international strait (see also II.5 below). The Policy proposes to assure these aims i.a. through increased military presence and “to project sea power throughout the region” (ibid, 3). Concretely, there are plans to acquire further ice-capable assets both for the US Navy and Coastguard, while lead responsibility for security in the region rests with the US Forces’ Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) (Bergh 2012, 10-15, Weze-man 2012). Possible “hard” security hazards are seen as including terrorist and criminal actions or piracy, as well as state activities. This security-oriented approach is hardly surprising in the decade following “9/11”; but what is striking (Macnab 2009) is that the US policy document is the only one not even mentioning (indigenous) peoples or communities among its main priorities or objectives,

although the involvement of “Arctic’s indigenous communities in decisions that affect them” is stated to be one of its targets (*ibid*, 2).

Second, US ratification of the Law of the Sea Convention is supported in the strategy and has continued to be a goal of the Obama Administration. Behind this is the fact that while the US has not as yet ratified the UNCLOS, it would like to establish the outer limits of its own continental shelf as well as push Russia toward ratification of the 1990 US-Russian boundary agreement. The issue remains, however, internally divisive: and while all security agencies as well as Alaskan representatives back UNCLOS, representatives from certain land-locked states – as well as those opposing international regulation on ideological grounds – have thus far blocked moves towards ratification on the Hill (Bergh 2012). Meanwhile, the Administration has tried to contain international repercussions by committing itself politically to respect the substance of UNCLOS as part of the common approach agreed with four other Arctic “littoral” states in the Ilulissat Declaration (2008).²⁸

Third, the Policy places a high priority on the environmentally sustainable management of natural resources and economic development in the region. Further, it appears to favour international governance taking place largely through the Arctic Council and the strengthening of institutional cooperation among the eight Arctic states.

Fourth, the Policy pledges continued US cooperation on Arctic issues through the United Nations and its agencies as well as international treaties, such as the United Nations Framework Conven-

28 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also attended the second public high-level meeting of five states hosted by Canada at Chelsea, Quebec, in 2010, but commented negatively afterwards on the idea of such restricted gatherings (“all hands are needed on deck”).

tion on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This reference to the UN stands alone among current national strategies, and might *inter alia* reflect Washington's relative openness (compared with Canada and Russia) to growing Arctic involvement by "new" global powers like China. On the issue of environmental protection, the text identifies the challenge of climate change and the related uncertainties, and recognizes that "[B]asic data is lacking in many fields". However, there is no mention of climate change as regards the implementation of the Policy.

Fifth, the Policy states that the United States of America is "an Arctic nation, with varied and compelling interests in that region" (The White House 2009, 29). In pursuit of the US objective to "continue to play a leadership role in research throughout the Arctic region", President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum in the summer of 2010 "that assigns responsibility for Arctic research to the White House National Science and Technology Council" (Farrow 2010).

Overall and despite its adoption by the Bush team, the "Arctic Region Policy" has been underpinned by various documents of the Obama Administration in establishing the Arctic region as a new area of steadily growing importance in US foreign policy. Further, the document can be interpreted as a response to the newest significant geopolitical changes in the Arctic region, and a recognition that these make it "necessary to develop coherent approaches to problems that occupy a wide spectrum of issues" (Macnab 2009, 27). While most observers would see Washington as still "punching below its weight" in Arctic affairs, the existing Policy would provide a

reasonably practical and non-contentious basis²⁹ for the US to raise its Arctic profile if so desired in future.

II.5 Canada

Canada's Northern Strategy "Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future" was released on July 2009 in Gatineau, Quebec (Government of Canada 2009) by the Government of Canada. It was followed by the "Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy" (Government of Canada 2010) on August 2010. The priority areas of the Strategy, which the Statement fully promotes, are the following: first, "exercising our Arctic sovereignty"; second, promoting social and economic development; third, protecting the North's environmental heritage; and fourth, improving and devolving Northern governance.

Background

The Canadian Government has been active in international High Northern and Arctic discussions and cooperation during the last decades, for instance by proposing and promoting the establishment of the Arctic Council in the early 1990s, and later in the 1990s pushing sustainable development and human security as the focus of circumpolar cooperation. Furthermore, already in the 1970s Canada enacted the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act (AWPPA) to protect the marine environment in its Arctic archipelago. This was an early and unique environment conservancy measure, though it

29 Since the sensitivity and asymmetric nature of US/Canadian disputes has acted as one damper on US Arctic activism so far, ways of overcoming these neighbourly tensions would become very important in the event of Washington's aiming to raise its Arctic profile.

did not wholly manage to convince other states that the Northwest Passage is Canada's internal waters (e.g. Heininen 1992).

In dealing with its own Northern regions of Yukon, Northwest territories and Nunavut (total population around 110,000), Canada has been somewhat ambivalent. Formally speaking, it has for some time developed strategies or policies addressing their needs at the local and regional circumpolar level, for example through the Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy (see Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade 2000). Domestically speaking, however, the interest shown in the High North by political leaders has fluctuated widely, and the Canadian Government's history overall is one of institutional neglect. The three Northern territories lack the autonomy enjoyed by other Canadian provinces and are marked by considerable socio-economic problems, thus limiting their integration in national society and governance (Borlase 2010, 83-92; Bergh 2012, 6-10).

In 2004 the Liberal Party of Canada launched *Canada's Northern Dimension*, a policy setting ambitious goals in terms of a national and foreign policy directive. The new conservative government, however, failed to pursue these objectives prior to its fall (up to 2007) and adopted a defensive stance following the Russian expedition to the shelf under the North Pole in August 2007. This shifted the debate towards an emphasis on sovereignty and national defense. In reality, the on-going disputes concerning northern waters, particularly the Northwest Passage (e.g. Byers 2009) are largely diplomatic and political in nature, the most challenging being the aforementioned disagreement with the USA and others over whether the Northwest Passage constitutes Canadian internal waters. None of these con-

flicts presents a real threat to Canadian sovereignty in the High North, as some domestic critics have pointed out.

Nonetheless, no other country reflects the complexity of geopolitical change(s) in the Arctic as well as Canada. Most recently, the Conservative Party of Canada and Prime Minister Stephen Harper have taken a considerably more direct interest in the North and “made the Arctic a major political platform” (Globe and Mail (Metro) National News, 2011-01-25, A12). Harper particularly emphasizes Canada’s sovereignty in the Arctic with his slogan “use it or lose it”. His Government has also initiated a number of projects aimed at bolstering the state, and thus Government’s impact on the territory of Canada’s North and in its communities. These projects were compounded into *Canada’s Northern Strategy* which was released in the summer of 2009. Though the government had expressed its intention to develop a strategy in advance, the release of the official document was met with criticism for failing to properly consult with northern indigenous organizations and northern communities as well as the academic community. The Government has, however, continued on this track and launched its 2010 Statement as a vehicle both to promote the Strategy and provide the “Government’s foreign policy statement” (Cannon 2010).

Relevant and interesting findings – discussion

In the Strategy Canada is defined as a “Northern nation”; the North is central to Canada’s character and national identity (Government of Canada 2009, 3). The term “Our North, our Heritage” refers geographically to Canada’s Northern territories, which are included in the definition of Canada’s heritage and future and even described as “central to the Canadian national identity” (ibid, 3). Further, Cana-

da's North is said to be "first and foremost about people – the Inuit, other Aboriginal peoples and Northerners" (ibid 3). However, neither (indigenous) peoples nor the human dimension are among the priorities of the Strategy, although "Empowering the Peoples of the North" is included in the Statement's four priorities (Government of Canada 2010, 22-24).

Second, Canada's "Arctic (maritime) Sovereignty" is stated to be the first priority and "our number one Arctic Foreign policy priority" (Government of Canada 2010, 3). According to the Munk School/Gordon Foundation's survey of public opinion (University of Toronto and Munk School of Global Affairs 2011) almost 60% of Northern Canadians agree that security of the Canadian Arctic is "extremely important and we should be putting more military resources in the area". The official strategy also identifies possible threats from international non-state sources such as crime and smuggling. It emphasizes the importance of strengthening Canada's presence in the Arctic by, for example, exerting rights based on the historical presence of the Inuit, and enhancing the military presence and control in the Arctic through the establishment of an Army Training Centre and the construction of a power icebreaker. These last measures are set in the context of the Harper Government's plans for a general rise in defense spending, and they have aroused some domestic debate *inter alia* on the point of whether the Canadian Coastguard (a civilian force) would be a better tool to develop for Arctic needs (Bergh 2012, 7-8).

In reference to existing disagreements, notably between Canada and the USA, the Statement contends that Canada's sovereignty over its Arctic lands and islands is "undisputed". It however says explicitly that there are neither conflicts nor a "race" for the High North

and consequently, according to the Statement, Canada is seeking to resolve these boundary issues. The Statement does not otherwise alter or affect official positions on the Northwest Passage, except that the latter has been recently renamed the Canadian North-West Passage (CNWP), and the application of the AWPPA has been extended from 100 to 200 nautical miles in accordance with the UNCLOS. However, the low profile of the CNWP issue (and of the bilateral US/Canadian boundary dispute in the Beaufort Sea) in the Strategy documents inadequately reflects the repercussions of such disputes for Canada's actual diplomacy and status in Arctic interrelationships. Strong feelings amongst the indigenous peoples and towards the US in general have helped impel the Harper Government to take one of the most conservative stances (with Russia) on enlargement of the Arctic Council and on the admission of new players (including institutions) to Arctic governance more generally. As noted, Canada has effectively blocked further NATO work on Arctic issues; it also takes a similar position on OSCE work, and is against any kind of opening towards the European Union (Bergh 2012).

Third and less contentiously, the Strategy also strongly emphasizes Arctic Science and the International Polar Year (IPY), with two key priority areas: climate change impacts, and human health and well-being. Through its big investments into the IPY Canada has become, and is, very much a global leader in Arctic science. Now it seeks to secure that position by establishing a new world-class research station, and thus trying to become a hub for scientific activities, an image of apparent importance to Canada.

Fourth, economic development, including the exploration and utilization of natural resources, is a high priority with the Canadian Government whereas transportation appears less so. Indigenous

groups are included in processes leading up to mega-projects for the utilization of natural resources, for example the Mackenzie Gas Project. This is tied in with indigenous ownership and land claim negotiations, and is thus an indication of devolution. An interesting point in the Statement is the implementation of a free trade agreement with EFTA member countries, as an avenue to enhancing trading relations with other Arctic states.

Fifth, the Strategy is obviously rather geared towards a domestic audience and designed to play a role in internal politics. It only includes a short chapter on international cooperation, which explains why it was necessary soon after to produce the Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy. Therefore, these two documents are viewed and analyzed here as one policy document. What is actually said on international aspects in the Strategy is fairly anodyne (compared with the reality) including support for the Arctic Council, and for further procedural strengthening of its effectiveness and status, as well as the importance of regulatory frameworks such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) (Bergh, 2012). In a sign that Canada's international Arctic activism is not limited to convening meetings of the five 'littoral' Arctic powers,³⁰ the country invited the defence chiefs of all eight AC members to Labrador in April 2012 to discuss their support for civilian tasks, such as search and rescue (Boswell, 2012). This gathering is set to become an annual event.

To conclude: in spite of criticisms aimed at it within Canada, the Strategy does include a stronger vision than in earlier history about, and for, the North in the context of the entire country's identity and

30 For more on this issue see the next section on Denmark.

development. Further, the two linked documents can be seen as a reflection, a response even, to the ongoing significant and multi-functional changes in the Arctic. Still up for debate (including within Canada) is the question of whether the more strident aspects of the country's current stance, including its highly exclusive vision of Arctic governance, are serving the Canadian people's best interests for the longer term.

II.6 Finland

"Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region" was adopted by the Finnish Cabinet Committee on the European Union and launched in June 2010 (Prime Minister's Office, Finland 2010). The Strategy defines Finland's objectives in the following substantial sectors: first, the environment; second, economic activities and know-how; third, transport and infrastructure; and fourth, indigenous peoples. These are followed by a list of the different contexts and means for achieving these Arctic policy goals. Additionally there is a chapter on the European Union and the Arctic Region. Finally, the Strategy sets out its principal conclusions and proposes further measures.

Background

Finland is a part of the circumpolar North and has been one of the eight states participating from the start of the current High Northern and Arctic cooperation. Further, "Finland has a primordial interest toward Arctic issues. Our geography and history make us an Arctic state, and we have significant economic, political and security interests in the region" (Mäkeläinen-Buhanist 2010). Finland has been, however, an Arctic country without access to the Arctic Ocean

or its sub-seas since it lost the Pechenga area (the Petsamo Municipality) to the Soviet Union in the 2nd World War.

Finland has also had some sort of 'de facto' Arctic/Northern policy since the beginning of the 1990s, reflected in two formal international proposals (Heininen 2002): first, in 1989 Finland promoted international cooperation on environmental protection in the Arctic, based on the Murmansk Speech by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev; and second, in 1997 Finland initiated work on the Northern Dimension of the European Union (see Lipponen 1997). The first initiative led to the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, which was signed by ministers of the eight Arctic states in 1991 in Rovaniemi, Finland (see The Rovaniemi Declaration 1991). Correspondingly, the second one led in 2000 to adoption of the EU's Northern Dimension (ND) policy, giving the EU for the first time its own dedicated framework for intervention in Northern Europe including the High North. In 2006, a new Northern Dimension Framework Document re-cast the ND as a common policy of the EU, the Russian Federation, Iceland and Norway in Northern Europe (e.g. European Union Commission 2000 and 2006).

Despite these two successful initiatives, Finland has neither shown interest at all times toward the entire circumpolar North nor been active in international Arctic cooperation. This is due to its geopolitical situation and strong interests within the Baltic Sea region, to which it is drawn both through its EU membership and Russia's proximity – as the design of the ND also indicates. In 2009, however, the Ministry of Finnish Foreign Affairs started a process of developing Finland's Arctic agenda with the objective of creating a policy or strategy. An ambassador for Arctic issues was nominated as Finland's "own northern envoy" in the summer of 2009. The Finnish

Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Stubb (2009) stated in September 2009 that “Finland needs a comprehensive and ambitious Arctic strategy of its own”. Previously, the (East-25 Department at the) Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared a confidential memorandum that served as foundation for a policy statement and invitation to debate on Arctic issues, made in July 2008 (Ulkoasiainministeriö 2008).

The Minister’s 2009 speech sparked a growing interest in Arctic issues within Finland, particularly as regards economic interests, against the background of climate change. This emerging interest was especially evident among stakeholders in businesses and organisations involved in the pursuit of regional development, economics and trade. Governmental activity was accelerated by the report on “Finland and the Arctic Regions” issued by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Finnish Parliament, as well as by a general discussion of Finland’s activities in the Arctic in Parliament in November 2009 (Ulkoasiainvaliokunta 2009). Meanwhile, the first seminar of a Finnish research network on Northern Politics and Security Studies had taken place in September 2009, and the second one was held at Helsinki in February 2010 with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A couple of days after, the Prime Minister’s Office appointed a working group of civil servants representing all the ministries “to prepare a report on Finland’s policy review for the Arctic region” (Prime Minister’s Office, Finland 2010, 7).

While this inter-agency group worked on a Finnish Arctic strategy, the Government in April 2010 also appointed an Advisory Board on Arctic Affairs to supervise strategy implementation and support, monitor and harmonise Finland’s activities in the Arctic. Finally, “Finland’s Strategy for the Arctic Region” was adopted by the

Finnish Cabinet Committee on the European Union and launched in June 2010. The issue re-emerged on the agenda of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Finnish Parliament in autumn 2010, when the Committee had its hearings and discussion on the Strategy.

Relevant and interesting findings – discussion

First, the Strategy is comprehensive and ambitious, reflecting a major effort to outline Finland's first-ever Arctic policy, and strongly asserting the country's identity as an Arctic state while also calling the European Union "a global Arctic player". Its character reflects the fact it was drafted by a group of civil servants rather than a broader advisory board representing different stakeholders – a group of the latter sort was appointed only two months after drafting started. However, the process was greatly accelerated and supported by the Finnish Parliament and promoted through its Foreign Affairs Committee's statement.

Second, the Strategy's four substantial main sectors and related objectives are in line with Finland's long-term traditional, national, political and economic interests in the Arctic and the Northern region generally. However, it is not entirely clear if they are priorities or priority areas, or mostly objectives, and consequently, what in fact Finland's main priorities are. Based on the text describing the main sectors and desiderata one can, however, deduce that the highest priorities of the Strategy are primarily economic interests in general, and those of marine transport, infrastructure and know-how, specifically. There are concrete proposals for action relating to the latter: for instance, when the Strategy supports increasing marine traffic and transport and better infrastructure. Indeed, there is a perceived need to develop transport and other logistical net-

works in both the Barents region and North Finland, as indicated by the document's list of five transport networks and corridors under discussion for Northern Finland (ibid, 26 and 74) – although only one or two of these are likely to be implemented in practice. On the other hand, some of the objectives, particularly those dealing with the drilling for oil and gas in the Barents Sea, can be seen as expressions of hope rather than realistic goals – although at least one Finnish company is involved in the Stockman gas field project. The same applied when the Snöhvit gas field in the Barents Sea was developed by the Norwegians; expectations among Finnish companies, particularly in North Finland, were high, but very little was gained from that project.

Thus, the Strategy is clearly business-oriented with a strong emphasis on economic activities, coupled with expertise, or know-how, particularly as concerns the utilization of natural resources, such as the oil and gas reserves of the Arctic region. To a certain extent this is understandable, since national strategy-making had to reflect the strong interests and expectations of stakeholders in both business and organisations engaged in the pursuit of regional development and economic interests. Such an orientation need not conflict with a Finnish strategic point of view that emphasises the importance of the High North in security-political terms – due to its high strategic position and potential for (global) energy security – as well as economically, due to its rich natural resources and potential for transportation (new global sea and air routes).

Third, the Strategy reflects the desire to promote and strengthen Finland's position as an international expert on Arctic issues and source of know-how in several fields (e.g. technology-based knowledge on winter shipping, sea transport and ship-building, forest

expertise, mining and metals industry, and cold-climate research). This sounds logical and sensible, and might be the case in terms of some fields of research, but is not necessarily the case when generally evaluating Finnish research in the context of international scientific cooperation. Therefore, the proposal to launch a national study programme using interdisciplinary and international cooperation on Northern issues is very welcome and necessary.

Fourth, the Strategy also emphasizes the special features of and risks to fragile Arctic ecosystems: importantly the term “fragile” has re-emerged, but of even greater importance is the protection of ecosystems. Climate change, pollution and biodiversity receive considerable attention. The importance of safe navigation in the Arctic seas is stressed, both in terms of physical impacts of climate change and in terms of a general expected increase in sea transportation. Increasing sea transport is even defined as “the biggest threat to Arctic marine ecosystems” (ibid, 28), despite the fact that there are heavy impacts from long-range air and water pollution, and mass-scale oil drilling. Further, the Strategy says that Arctic research, regional climate models and long-term monitoring of the state of the environment should feed into decision-making processes, clearly indicating the importance of the interplay between science and politics. Interestingly the uncertainty related to climate change is not emphasized (as a challenge), but nuclear safety in the Kola Peninsula is, though this problem has been under control for a few years now. Here the Strategy runs into an inner contradiction, stating at the same time (a) that increased human activity also raises the risk of environmental pollution (ibid, 15), and (b) that it is important for Finnish interests to see all types of land-based and offshore economic activities increase (notably in Norway and Rus-

sia) (ibid, 18). Which of these is the real priority, you might ask (see Heininen 2011, 28)?

Failure to address this dilemma suggests a rather short-sighted approach in a strategy that claims a focus “on external relations”, and where climate change is defined as one of the most severe challenges in the Arctic. In terms of principle it would seem logical to give highest priority to protecting Arctic ecosystems threatened by rapid climate change, and to promote and export the Finnish know-how and expertise (in environmental technology) likely to be most helpful here. At the very least the Strategy could have identified clearer linkages between the different sectors, i.e. the interactions of economic activities with both ecosystems and peoples, as is actually done later in the document when the ‘Arctic Window’ of the Northern Dimension is introduced (ibid, 49). This would establish a more global perspective and offer an alternative rationale for why the High North plays such an important role in world politics.

Fifth, the Strategy is at its best when emphasizing that the Arctic region is a stable and peaceful area – “High North – low tension”, and that Finland supports “non-conflictual rules” (see Stubb 2009; Heininen 2010b). Further, the recognition of the rise in global importance of the Arctic region notably in the climate change context is well expressed and in line with the recent and emerging discourse on globalization (e.g. Heininen 2010b). In declaring that the Arctic Council is now, and should continue to be the main forum on Arctic affairs and policy “Finland strives to increase international cooperation in the Arctic” at many levels and bilaterally (Prime Minister’s Office, Finland, 2010, 52). This statement is both very important and timely, pointing to the real need for the mandate of the Council to be renegotiated and broadened from the current state of some sort

of political ‘inability’ into a competence for addressing ‘real’ issues, such as the interrelationship between the utilization of natural resources, stricter protection of the fragile environment and impacts of globalization (Heininen and Numminen 2011).

Sixth, the Strategy includes objectives concerning Indigenous peoples, particularly those of the Barents Region such as the Saami, and their active participation in international cooperation. Absent, however, is a clear declaration of intent to ratify the ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (e.g. Magga 2002), although this would be very timely and relevant for the Saami and their self-determination. Furthermore, Finland believes that UNCLOS is, and will be, a sufficient framework and tool to resolve Arctic issues, and that there is no need for a new international, legally-binding agreement or regime. Albeit political realism, this is a rather traditional and narrow state-oriented approach, when the real challenges are comprehensive and global and would ideally demand the attention and participation of a global community, coupled with a desire to engage in new ways of thinking.

Seventh, the Strategy emphasizes the importance of the European Union’s Arctic policy as well as its role in the Arctic region, referring to “The EU as a global Arctic player” (Prime Minister’s Office, Finland 2010, 45). It is also emphasized that the EU’s Arctic policy should be further developed. This could be interpreted to mean that politics is a priority, trumping economics and leading Finland to profile itself as an advocate for, or defender of, the EU in Arctic affairs. This sounds logical from Finland’s point of view, but may involve risks for Finland as a member country of the AC and generally in the context of multilateral Arctic cooperation. Opinion

regarding the role of the EU as an Arctic actor varies significantly among the Arctic states and indigenous peoples, reflected in somewhat hesitant responses to the EU's efforts, as discussed further in the EU strategy section below.

To conclude: the Finnish Strategy covers most features of a modern strategy adopting a holistic approach. It can also be seen as reflecting and responding to the recent significant and multi-functional (global) changes in the Arctic region. It does not set clear priorities or priority areas, though apparent national preferences are seen in its emphasis on economic activities including transport, infrastructure and know-how, and in its general support for European and international cooperation in Arctic issues, based on international treaties.

II.7 Iceland

The Report "Iceland in the High North" on Iceland's position and status in the Arctic was published by the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs in September 2009 (Utanrikisraduneytid 2009). The following year, the Icelandic Foreign Minister proposed to the Icelandic parliament (Alþingi) the principles of an Icelandic Arctic strategy, which the Alþingi eventually approved – with some adjustments – in its "Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy" approved in March 2011 (Althingi 2011). This document, now the authoritative basis for policy, contains twelve principles emphasizing, on the one hand, the importance of securing Iceland's position as a coastal state within the Arctic region, and on the other hand, the improvement of the wellbeing of Arctic residents and their communities i.a. through access to sustainable development.

Background

Iceland is a small island nation (less than 320 000 inhabitants) with an ambivalent geographic location halfway between North America and Europe, while culturally and historically forming a clear part of Europe and the Nordic heritage. Indeed, the country was caught between the two fronts and placed at the centre of naval warfare in the 2nd World War, and then in the maritime strategies of the Cold War. Iceland played a strategically important role in the development of the UN's Convention on the Law of the Sea in the 1970s and 1980s as one of the leading countries in the negotiations. This was largely because the Icelandic economy at the time was entirely dependent on fisheries, as reflected in the events related to the Cod Wars of the 1970s between Iceland and Britain. Further, the country played a special role in promoting the issue of nuclear safety in Northern seas in the 1980s and early 1990s, focusing on nuclear submarine accidents and radioactive wastes and the connected risks. The immediate cause for concern was fish and fisheries, but underlying were notions of the interplay between utilization of resources and environmental security, indicating an emergent notion of comprehensive security.

In the Arctic Council, Iceland held a successful chairmanship in 2003-2004 which saw the launch of two important reports, the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) and the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR). The first meeting of Parliamentarians of the Arctic also took place in Reykjavik. The North Icelandic town of Akureyri hosts the offices of two working groups of the Arctic Council, CAFF (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna) and PAME (Protection of Arctic Marine Environment), as well as the Northern Research Forum secretariat. Akureyri University also runs an Inter-

national Polar Law LLM and MA programme, has attracted Norwegian and French funding for High Northern research and hosted a number of international Arctic conferences.

The first decade of the 21st century proved to be a bumpy ride for Iceland, leaving the country with several challenges and uncertainties over its future. On the one hand it remains strategically tied to the USA through its NATO membership and the 1951 Bilateral Defence Agreement; but the USA's unilateral withdrawal from its Keflavik base (and other Icelandic sites and functions) in 2006 has reduced both the practical importance of, and trust in, this relationship. On the other hand Iceland has steadily deepened its involvement in European integration first through EFTA, and then EEA and Schengen, membership, and in 2009 applied for full membership of the EU: but the outcome of the resulting negotiations is very much in doubt (Avery, Bailes and Thorhallsson 2011). A third important strand in Icelandic foreign policy is Nordic cooperation and the cultivation of other regional frameworks, including the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Council of Baltic Sea States, and the EU's Northern Dimension. Iceland's West-Nordic cooperation with Greenland, the Faroe Islands and (for social/cultural purposes) Norway has also raised its profile recently. Finally, Iceland has followed the typical Nordic example of global activism on a smaller scale, including development aid for the poorest and civilian contributions to peace-keeping: it made an unsuccessful bid for one of the rotating UNSC seats in 2008.

Both domestically and internationally, Icelandic politics were rocked by the economic crash of autumn 2008 and the subsequent revelations of commercial and political wrong-doing. While the economic down-turn had bottomed out by 2012, the crisis has left

the country more divided than ever over external strategy, with the centre-left increasingly convinced of the need to seek shelter in Europe (and the Euro) while other parties and probably a majority of the population have been strengthened in their nationalist, particularist instincts. Against this background, the new Arctic agenda and even the broader prospect of climate change has provided one relatively positive factor in the nation's future and, in policy terms, has been handled with an unusual degree of consensus.

Icelandic ambitions were first concretized in an Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006) report called "North meets North. Navigation and the Future of the Arctic", which was followed in March 2007 by an international conference on Arctic development and maritime transportation (Government of Iceland 2007). The Chairman's Summary of that meeting anticipated many of the current Arctic "hot issues" including uncertainties of the Arctic environment, improved regulation, navigation safety, search and rescue, and the need for new technologies and economic models. Its key finding was however that "Iceland could play a role in the opening of a Trans-arctic Shipping Route, because its location in the middle of the Northern Atlantic", and serve "as a leading hub for container traffic" (*ibid*, 26).

By the time the government's Report "Iceland in the High North" was published in 2009, the sobering effect of the 2008 crash – and of new uncertainties about Arctic melting and shipping – left its mark in a more cautious assessment and broader multi-functional focus. The document's six key headings were: international cooperation; security through international cooperation; resource development and environmental protection; transportation; people and cultures; and international cooperation on research and monitoring. The

downsides of Arctic uncertainty were more clearly identified and, as the sub-titles suggest, the need for better cooperation was emphasized throughout. However, this Report also highlighted Iceland's claims as "the only country" located "entirely within the Arctic region", underlining how heavily its prosperity has relied and will continue to rely on sustainable utilization of the region's natural resources. Icelandic representatives spoke on similar lines at a well-attended NATO conference on the Arctic that was hosted at Reykjavik in January 2009, and where the need for any future Alliance involvement to be prudent and cooperation-oriented was especially stressed.

The next step towards a national Icelandic Strategy was taken with the Icelandic Foreign Minister's annual report to Parliament in May 2010, where "Iceland's interests in the High North" were one of four areas emphasized. Minister Skarphéðinsson proposed that the national aim should be, first, to secure Iceland's position as a coastal state (thus achieving the same status as the so-called five littoral states) by for example, developing "legal and geographical arguments for Iceland's role in international decision-making regarding the High North"; second, "to promote and strengthen the Arctic Council as the most important forum for circumpolar cooperation"; third, to support international agreements, particularly UNCLOS, and contribute to establishing the Search and Rescue agreement; fourth, "to work against the militarization of the High North"; fifth, to increase cooperation between Iceland and Greenland within the energy sector; and finally, to support the rights of indigenous peoples (Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland 2010, 3). After detailed study in the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Alþingi in its Resolution of 2011 endorsed all the government's principles,

but chose to set the strengthening of the Arctic Council first. It also added a new point calling for better coordination of government ministries and agencies dealing with Arctic matters.

Relevant and interesting findings – discussion

First, Iceland's Arctic documents are noteworthy in placing little or no emphasis on sovereignty as such, perhaps reflecting the fact that Iceland has no unresolved territorial claims and is content to explore for seabed hydrocarbons in the 'Dragon' quadrant of its EEZ. Sovereignty is, to be sure, still an emotive theme in Icelandic policy debates generally, but concerns in that field are currently focused more on the EU, on post-crash financial disputes, and fishery issues within existing jurisdictions. What takes the place of this factor in the Arctic is Iceland's clear insistence on its status as an Arctic nation and equal interlocutor, in all relevant contexts. Its bid for 'littoral' status has a technical bearing on various fishery matters but is also intended as an explicit challenge to the five (recognized) littoral states of the Arctic Ocean and their separate ministerial meetings (see under Denmark and Canada above). More broadly, the Foreign Ministry and Alþingi both endorse the position that the Arctic "should not be limited to a narrow geographical definition but rather be viewed as an extensive area when it comes to ecological, economic, political and security matters" (Alþingi 2011, 1).

Second, and balancing this assertive element, Iceland's strategy puts even more emphasis than Finland's on assuring stability and security through international and scientific cooperation. This reflects a distinctive national interest at several levels, starting with Iceland's self-awareness as a (very) small state that can only flourish in a peaceful and level international playing-field. Iceland's lack of

armed forces makes it even more than usually dependent on others' good behaviour, explaining the emphasis on working "against the militarization of the High North" (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland 2010, 3). We may also see here a continuation of Icelandic notions of comprehensive, including environmental, security, as developed in the 1980s. At the second level, Iceland has an interest in teaming up with like-minded powers to balance the larger ones and multilateralize power processes: this has been especially clear in recent years when successive Icelandic governments have pressed for more open Nordic cooperation in security and defence, with an explicit application to the Arctic region. The appeal made by the Parliamentary Nordic Council, in its Reykjavik session of March 2012, for the Nordic states to adopt a *joint* Nordic strategy will have sat well with Icelandic decision-makers, even if other neighbours may find it premature; and Reykjavik's new efforts for West Nordic solidarity point the same way (Bailes and Ólafsson, forthcoming). Thirdly, Iceland has focused more in recent years on specific Arctic emergencies that could outstrip its own capabilities, notably the risk of shipping disasters and major pollution events near its coast, and its diplomacy has been effective in driving the Arctic Council to adopt its first-ever legally binding cooperation agreements – on search and rescue and prospectively, oil-spills.

Third, resource development, including renewable energy and the fishing industry, is of high importance in the protection of Iceland's interests; higher even than environmental protection, which was barely mentioned in the 2009 Report. Even if hopes of early development have been lowered, Iceland remains keenly interested in providing the location for a new Arctic transshipment hub to serve new cargo routes, new services for tourist routes, and/

or facilities and supplies for new oil-gas exploration zones. (It would also like to be the location for any new Arctic research and monitoring centres, though it lost out to Tromsø for the permanent Arctic Council secretariat.) The Icelandic documents of 2007-9 are also unusual in focussing on new aviation possibilities. Of all Arctic states, however, Iceland has the least chance of financing such developments itself or even competing for the major industrial/technological work involved. This may provide one explanation of why some Icelandic leaders, including President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, have spoken so positively of a growing Chinese influence and investment in Arctic exploration. Iceland has no reason to feel strategically threatened by China and might indeed expect China's presence to militate against aggressive Russia (or Canadian) behaviour; while even a small injection of China's bountiful sovereign funds would do wonders for the Icelandic economy. Leaving aside the possible naïvety of these calculations, however, Icelandic public opinion in its present mood is no more happy about Chinese intrusions within the country than about other foreign 'interference', as shown by the initial rejection of Chinese magnate Huang Nubo's efforts to buy up estate in the North-east of the country.

Fourth, the importance of multilateral cooperation for Iceland is also seen in the 2009 Report's strong emphasis on international cooperation in research, monitoring and higher education. This was echoed by the Parliamentary Resolution when promoting Iceland "as a venue for meetings, conferences and discussions on the Arctic region". Recent academic cooperation agreements reached at Akureyri have been mentioned above, and other Icelandic universities are starting to advertise their own Arctic-related capacities and ambitions. A current general review of Icelandic security strategy

taking place in a cross-Party working group of the Alþingi is addressing inter alia the need for new officially-supported research on foreign and security affairs, where the Arctic would certainly provide a central or even dominant theme.

Fifth and last, while Iceland's Arctic documents do not mention the EU, the Arctic dimension of Iceland's possible EU accession has been a point of high interest in Brussels and has been addressed i.a. at several sessions in the European Parliament. At strategic level, on the one hand, Iceland's territory would give the EU a stronger regulatory foothold and forward base for engagement in Arctic exploitation, while on the other hand Iceland would gain the benefit of EU 'shelter' also while pursuing its Arctic interests (Avery et al 2011). In fact, leaving aside the issue of whaling, the current Icelandic and EU Arctic strategies are fully compatible. But this also means that cooperation could continue and grow even without Iceland's full membership, making use of the Northern Dimension, Iceland's presence in EU scientific and educational networks, its alignment with EU environmental and nuclear safety policies, and so forth. A more significant effect of Icelandic EU entry would be if it started a 'chain reaction' also affecting Norwegian, or even Faroese and Greenlandic, attitudes to integration – but this is a long shot, given that current opinion polls show only c. 30% of Icelanders willing to vote for accession.

To conclude: Iceland's strategy-forming process shows a growing understanding of the full range and implications of changes in the Arctic; a grasp of the particular challenges facing a very small entity in this context; and an instinct for cooperation that is cur-

rently much clearer in this setting than in Icelandic external policy overall.

II.8 Sweden

A Swedish strategy for policy in the Arctic region, “Sweden’s strategy for the Arctic region” was adopted by the Swedish Government in May 2011 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Press release, 12 May 2011). It focuses particularly on three defined priority areas: first, Climate and the environment; second, Economic development; and third, The human dimension.

Background

As already noted, Sweden was the last of the eight Arctic states to issue and approve its Arctic or northern strategy or policy. Pressure had been growing on Sweden and its government to do so, not least due to the Swedish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. Indeed, on the same day as publishing its Arctic Strategy, Sweden formally took over that office and published its “Chairmanship Programme for the Arctic Council 2011-2013” (Government Offices of Sweden 2011). The Programme gives priority “to issues that will promote environmentally sustainable development of the Arctic”, emphasizing the following three issues: first, “Environment and climate”; second, “The people”; and third, “A stronger Arctic Council”.

Before reaching this point, few Swedish official statements were issued, or speeches made by Swedish politicians, on the Arctic and northern issues. An exception was the speech by Foreign Minister Carl Bildt at the Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council in 2009, where he indicated the key issues or priorities on the Swed-

ish agenda. These included strengthening of the Arctic Council, shipping in Arctic waters, research, climate change and other environmental challenges, and policy concerning the Swedish Sami population (Bildt 2009). Further, two Swedish research institutions, The Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) organized an international conference “The New Arctic: Building cooperation in the face of emerging challenges” in April 2011 in Stockholm. This was the first such event in Sweden to focus on the emerging challenges in the Arctic, and to explore possibilities of promoting cooperative governance frameworks such as the Arctic Council.

Sweden has, however, been involved in the current international Arctic cooperation from the very beginning, since it is a co-founder of the Arctic Council. As the Strategy clearly points out, historically Sweden has natural and strong ties to the Arctic region: geographically, since the country’s territory extends well beyond the Arctic Circle, and demographically, since the Sami have lived in Sweden for centuries. Moreover, Sweden has substantially contributed to Polar research for more than a hundred years; this research is promoted and coordinated by the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat, and published in an annual Yearbook. For example, the Abisko Scientific Research Station was established in the beginning of the 20th century, and one of the latest Swedish research projects is “Mistra – Arctic Futures in a Global Context” (see SWEDARCTIC and SWEDARP 2011-2015). All in all, there are many ties which connect Sweden to the Arctic region.

Relevant and interesting findings – discussion

First, and foremost, it can be taken as an achievement that the Swed-

ish Government, or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, adopted and launched the Arctic Strategy at the same time – even the same day – when the Swedish chairmanship of the Arctic Council started. As the last of the Arctic states to define a comprehensive position, Sweden was left with limited time, but came under growing international (and domestic) pressure, to do so. To an extent these circumstances can be seen reflected in the Strategy, which is rather traditional without any surprises or special emphases. This could, however, also be taken as a strength since the result is a straightforward and uncontentious document with clear, though not surprising, priorities.

Second, what is interesting here is the discussion of the many ties that have connected and still connect Sweden to the Arctic region, such as historical, security-political and cultural factors. The main reason for including the chapter “Sweden and the Arctic” in the Strategy may have been to establish and define Sweden’s legitimacy as an Arctic country; and indeed, national identity-building is socially constructed, making it constantly subject to the evolution of discourse. That aside, the chapter is above all very informative and interesting, and provides good background information on Sweden.

Third and as mentioned earlier, the three priorities of the Strategy are not surprising, nor is it strange that climate and the environment comes first. The fact that there are only three priorities makes the Swedish Strategy one of the most focused among the Arctic strategies. Out of the three priorities, economic development can be taken as the most rich and multifunctional area of the Strategy, including an emphasis on free trade (in the entire Arctic region), industrial policy (in the Barents region) and economic interests in

many fields, such as mining, petroleum, forestry, tourism, transport, shipping and ice-breaking, and reindeer-herding. A slightly surprising point is that the Strategy emphasizes petroleum, i.e. oil and gas resources of the Barents Sea region, even more than mining which has been, and is still, the dominant industry in North Sweden. As a conclusion, economic development could even be seen as a virtual top priority in Sweden's Arctic policy.

Fourth, the two other priorities, Climate environment and the environment, and The human dimension (i.e. people) are much the same as the focus areas of Sweden's Chairmanship Programme for the Arctic Council 2011-2013. Here one relevant difference is that 'Resilience', which has been something of a flagship project for the Swedish Chairmanship (Lind 2011), is not emphasized in the Strategy.

Fifth, the Strategy clearly states that effective multilateral cooperation in, and dealing with, the Arctic is Sweden's main current goal. This is confirmed by a long list of forums and organizations where Sweden is a member and actively involved. Unlike the Finnish Strategy, the Swedish document does not, however, emphasize a role of the European Union in the Arctic. This could reflect the alternative focus on Sweden's Swedish chairmanship of the Arctic Council: but there is also a strong tradition in the foreign policy of Sweden of seeking freedom for national activism outside the bounds of the EU, and we may be seeing this (for the first time) applied to modern-day Arctic cooperation.

In sum, Sweden's strategy for the Arctic covers most features of a modern strategy, particularly in terms of defining concrete objectives for each priority. It can be seen as a reflection and response to the recent significant and multi-functional (global) change(s) in the

Arctic, as well as to the growing interest and pressure by the other Arctic states and several non-Arctic states.

II.9 European Union

The European Union's interests and policy objectives in the Arctic region were most fully presented in the "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – The European Union and the Arctic Region" (European Commission 2008), published in November 2008 – which sets it around the middle of the chronological sequence of other strategies. Its findings were supported, with some interesting nuances, in the conclusions and mandates adopted by the EU Council of Ministers (2009b) in December 2009. The main policy objectives proposed in the Commission's Communication are, first, protecting and preserving the Arctic environment and its population; second, promoting sustainable use of resources; and third, contributing to enhanced Arctic multilateral governance. In July 2012 the Commission and the EU's High Representative for CFSP (Baroness Ashton) jointly submitted a progress report and new evaluation of EU Arctic policy (European Commission and EU High Representative 2012), which is expected to lead to Council discussion and further conclusions later in the year.

Background

After Greenland used its prerogative to opt out of the European Community in 1985, the European Union had no physical presence in the Arctic but nonetheless remained influential for the region in several ways. In 1995 the European Union regained its High North-

ern extension when Finland and Sweden joined the Union. The significance of this was underlined by the initiative Finland took under its first EU Presidency, in 1999, to include a Northern Dimension within the Union's neighbourhood policies (see II.6 above, and further below). Further, the EU Commission was one of the original signatories of the Kirkenes Declaration, along with Russia and the Nordic countries, establishing the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in 1993. EU support for the initiative was linked mainly with efforts for confidence-building with Russia, and hopes of rallying support for the upcoming referenda on EU membership in Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Like other players, the EU has felt a need to define its own Arctic character: the Commission's 2008 Communication called it "inextricably tied to the Arctic Region... by a unique combination of history, geography, economy and scientific achievements." More specifically, the latest (2012) Communication cites, first, the EU's leading role in fighting climate change; second, the three (and with Iceland, potentially four) Arctic Council members who have joined the EU;³¹ third, the EU as a market for Arctic energy and other resources (including 30% of fish caught in the Arctic); and fourth, the impact of specific EU policies and regulations on the Arctic region and its stakeholders (European Commission and EU High Representative, 2012,3). These longer-term aspects of Union involvement may be examined in more detail before turning to the phase of overt EU strategy-forming.

Impacts of climate change, which both directly and indirectly

³¹ The 2008 Communication also points out the membership of Norway and Iceland in the European Economic Area (EEA) and the EU's important relationships with the USA; Canada and Russia.

affects the Arctic ecosystem and peoples, have long been an EU concern and are mentioned in many policy documents by the Union. The EU has not only profiled itself as a pathfinder in international climate policy but has made climate change one of its main priorities in internal and external relations (e.g. Barroso 2006; Airoidi 2008, 10; Neumann and Rudloff 2010, 7-8). While the EU did not previously put particular stress on the Arctic region's vulnerability to climate change and its impacts, the Union has been involved throughout in international negotiations on climate policy, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. It has also recognized the Arctic region as a key area of influence in Northern Hemisphere climate and climate research (e.g. Lipiatou 2008). Logically, EU policy on climate- and environment-related research,³² and on the development of monitoring assets and technologies, can be seen as relevant and potentially beneficial for Arctic peoples and communities (e.g. Egerton 2008; Lipiatou 2008).

The Union also has significant legal competence and power to make regulations in Arctic related fields (European Parliament, 2010c), such as: environmental and climate change policy, research, fisheries, animal welfare and trade, energy and maritime transport, and regional development through the cohesion policy and particular programs. Where Arctic environmental issues are regulated internationally by international environmental treaties, such as the Stockholm Convention on POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants),

32 The EU research on Polar Regions (both the Arctic and the Antarctic) has mostly been funded via the Framework Programme; for example, more than 50 research projects of the Fifth and Sixth FP were related entirely or partially to polar issues (Lipiatou 2008). The 2012 Communication claims that 200 million Euro of EU money has gone to Arctic research since 2002.

the EU has been involved either through its member-states or the EU Commission, or both. Furthermore, as long-range air and water pollution has been one of the most severe environmental problems in the highest latitudes, the EU legal competence would also come through the Common Agricultural Policy.

There has long been an active EU–Arctic relationship in energy and transport, mainly because many EU member-states are heavily dependent on fossil fuels produced in, and transported from, the Norwegian and Russian parts of the Arctic. Shipping lines and marine insurance companies based in EU member countries are also involved. Further important interactions arise over fisheries and conservation of marine resources, which under the Common Fisheries Policy belongs to an exclusive competence of the Union. Here the Union’s main influence is directed towards the way Arctic fisheries are conducted; for example in terms of reducing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (European Parliament, 2010c, 8 and 27-29). Although the EU member-states only hold a minor share³³, influence is exerted through fish trade as the EU is a major export destination for the Arctic states. For example, about 80% of Icelandic and 60% of Norwegian fish exports go to EU markets (Neumann and Rudloff 2010).

A more controversial application of the EU’s legal competence in the Arctic region has concerned sealing and trade in Arctic wildlife products. The Union handles these issues from a standpoint of animal welfare and nature conservation under agricultural and environmental policies, but they also have implications for internal market regulations and policy towards Northern Indigenous peo-

33 Annually about 4% of all EU catches are caught in the Arctic waters, which is 2.6% of total EU catches.

ples (Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union, 2010, 10 and 32-36; Airoidi 2008, 87-90). The EU's opposition to sealing and whaling has for some time been a bone of contention with (variously) indigenous people's groups, Canada, and Iceland, a recent case being the EU trade ban on seals and seal products imposed from April 2009 (e.g. Arctic Athabaskan Council 2008; Cannon 2009). International law-suits brought by the indigenous peoples against this measure are currently *sub judice*.

The EU's Northern Dimension (ND) policy, arising from a Finnish initiative of 1997, was approved in 2000 and implemented by way of two Action Plans. It was first designed as an external foreign policy of the Union in (North) Europe, directed particularly at cooperation and confidence-building with (Northwest) Russia, and the Arctic segment of the ND region was not particularly highlighted. However, Arctic-relevant aims were always on the agenda as a 'cross-cutting issue' – the key goals of the first ND Action Plan (European Council 2000) were to increase stability and civic security; to enhance democratic reforms; and to create positive interdependence and sustainable development – and Greenland was explicitly involved in the process. Indeed, the Home Rule Government of Greenland used its power of initiative to propose an "Arctic Window" within the Northern Dimension in 1999. To include the Arctic as a real "cross-cutting issue, main-streamed within each key-priority" would emphasize the role of Northern societies, and thus form new and more fruitful kinds of global North-South relations (*ibid*).

This 'Arctic window' was confirmed when the ND was re-cast in 2006 as a common policy by the EU, the Russian Federation, Iceland and Norway in and for North Europe (European Union Commis-

sion 2006). The new balance of ownership underlined the policy's aim not just to boost concrete cross-border cooperation, but to strengthen stability and integration in the European part of the circumpolar North through an inter-state process of region-building that can also benefit non-state actors (*vide* the objective of visa-free travel between the EU and Russia). Indeed, the implied priority given to the High North spurred a group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to demand similar attention to the broader Baltic region, leading to the adoption in July 2010 of "The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region" (European Parliament 2010a). Meanwhile the ND's 2010 Ministerial meeting called for the "Arctic window" to be developed further, without duplicating BEAC and other actions in the field; and for greater engagement of indigenous peoples in the ND's work.

Moves towards a more explicit, comprehensive Arctic strategy of the EU began with an Opinion adopted by the European Parliament in October 2008 (European Parliament 2008), which ruffled some feathers in the region with its call for a single Arctic Treaty and its strong line on sealing and whaling. Less widely noted but far more important for decision-making purposes was the Commission's Communication published the following month on a proposed Arctic strategy for the Union (European Commission 2008). Showing traces of lobbying and advice from Norway as well as the EU's Nordic members, this defined five main priority areas: environment and climate change, support for indigenous peoples and local populations, research and monitoring, sustainable use of resources, and "Enhancing Multilateral governance for the Arctic". For this last it supported building on existing legal and institutional frameworks, including the Arctic Council, rather than a new Treaty; and in gen-

eral kept a less controversial tone, albeit using firm language on the importance of freedom of shipping and Europe's general right to take part in Arctic exploitation and development. A final point of interest was that the document was coordinated in the Commission's Directorate-General for maritime affairs (DG MARE), with foreign and security policy staffs in the Commission and Council apparatus apparently little involved.

The Council of the European Union adopted a set of Conclusions, including mandates for follow-up, based on the Commission's paper in December 2009 (EU Council of Ministers 2009). Interestingly, this Council text signaled a more prudent level of ambition by speaking of the "gradual" development of "an overarching approach to EU policy" (not strategy!) on Arctic affairs (*ibid*, 2); it also noted the need to respect individual states' prerogatives. Retaining the environment and climate change as its first emphasis, the Council nevertheless adjusted the Commission's agenda by going on to highlight multilateral governance; the importance of international law including the UNCLOS; "habitats and peoples"; "peace and stability"; and only finally, sustainable resource use. Overall, therefore, the implied emphasis shifted towards stability, cooperation and the need for protection (both human and environmental) rather than Europe's own claims to a slice of the cake. However, the Council document also endorsed the Commission's proposal to seek a permanent observer's place for the EU at the Arctic Council. Having been initially turned down, this failed again to be accepted at the AC's 7th Ministerial Meeting of 12 May 2011 at Nuuk, Greenland, which went no further than adopting general conclusions on the role of and criteria for observers (Nuuk Declaration 2011)

Meanwhile, the European Parliament continued to occupy itself

with Arctic issues, creating among other things an 'EU Arctic Forum' to allow discussion and the spread of information. It hosted the conference of The Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (linked with the ND) at Brussels in September 2010. An updated "Report on a sustainable EU policy for the High North" (European Parliament 2010b), with MEP Michael Gahler as the Rapporteur, was adopted by the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament in December 2009 (and as non-legislative resolution by the Plenary sitting in January 2011). This text argued that "there has been a longstanding engagement of the EU in the Arctic by way of its involvement" in Northern Dimension policy, the Barents cooperation and bilateral cooperation (*ibid*, 5), and called for further progress in consolidating a policy that was still in an "emerging" phase. Significantly, it toned down appeals for an Arctic Treaty, which – the Parliament had meanwhile been told – was not supported by any local peoples, let alone the Arctic states. In general, the Parliament's line has become more moderate and closer to the Commission's with the passage of time, no doubt as part of a learning process.

The Commission's latest, 2012 Communication remains to be considered by the Council (at the time of writing) so cannot yet be confirmed as a new stage in EU policy. It provides, mainly, an updating and a fresher, stronger presentation of the Commission's earlier approach rather than any significant change. In terms of priorities it suggests the two triads of "knowledge, responsibility and engagement", and of "protecting and preserving", "promoting the sustainable use of resources" and "international engagement", as the watchwords for the EU's role. It relatively de-emphasizes shipping to provide a more detailed and multi-functional treatment of the central section on "sustainable management and use of resources",

and also a more thorough treatment of research and monitoring issues.³⁴ While the EU's High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy now appears as a co-owner of the new document, themes of "peace and stability" are not directly taken up. Rather, the report starts with a statement of the EU's *raison d'être* in the Arctic context that seems more consciously targeted than before at international opinion; and the need for cooperation and contact with other actors is stressed throughout, i.a. in the context of recent visits by Baroness Ashton and the Fisheries Commissioner (Maria Damanaki) to Finland, Sweden, Norway (including Svalbard) and Greenland. Overall, the document concludes that the EU "has an important role to play....in helping to meet the challenges that now confront the region", and it calls for a further strengthening of EU Arctic policy.

Relevant and interesting findings – discussion

The first point that might be raised, even today, is why the EU should have an Arctic policy/strategy at all – given that no other major European institution has one. According to the "Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union" the EU's aims are: "to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples"; it shall "offer its citizens an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers"; and "establish an internal market"; and "an economic and monetary union (EMU) whose currency is the euro". Peace is already a characteristic of the broader Arctic, and the other key fea-

34 Notably, the Communication proposes that Arctic-related research should be fully integrated in the "Europe 2020" programmes known as "Innovation Union" and "Horizon 2020", which provide the current frame for planning EU research investments in 2014-20 (European Commission and EU High Representative 2012, 6).

tures of EU integration are thus far relevant only to a small slice of High Northern territory in Finland and Sweden, *pace* Iceland's possible accession. On the other hand, if the Arctic is conceived as a *neighbour* region of the core EU, then the conceptual basis of an EU policy may look stronger as an analogue to the Union's Eastward- and Southward-looking European Neighbourhood Policy (now including an "Eastern dimension"). More specifically, the emerging Arctic concept offers a wider geostrategic framework for the Northern Dimension to which the Union is already committed in the European High North, and balances the recently adopted Baltic region strategy. It also gives the EU a stronger foundation to stand on when dealing with specific Arctic-related issues that are bound to arise in its bilateral relationships with the Russian Federation, US and Canada (or prospectively, China).

Second, any EU policy or strategy document has a special character as an effort to reconcile internal variations or differences of view and interest, both national and institutional. In this case, the activism of the European Parliament played a clear role in triggering serious Commission and Council work on the subject; but the Parliament got off to an unfortunate start by espousing some ideas that offended more experienced Arctic players. Since 2008 as more information and advice on Arctic matters has percolated to Brussels, the positions of the three main EU institutions seem to have gradually converged, and there is little in the new Commission/High Representative Communication that should upset either the Council or Parliament. However, continuing nuances among EU nations' views have been noted by informed observers (Daemers 2012), and could go a long way to explain why the EU's policy is still "emerging" rather than a firm unitary platform. In our own analysis

above, while Finland clearly wants a strong EU role as a vehicle for its own aims, we have seen that Sweden is reluctant to be circumscribed by common policies, while Denmark has limited tolerance for interference with the internal affairs of the Kingdom. The “Big Three” of France, Germany and the UK have shown little sign of engagement with Arctic issues so far and the interest of Southern and Eastern member states, aside perhaps from the Spanish fishing and shipping communities, is naturally limited.

Third and balancing this, the Commission and Council documents are right to stress that the EU’s own activities and its legal competences impact upon the Arctic in many ways. The EU has adopted a central role in international climate policy negotiations and would like to see itself as a global leader in fighting climate change. Its market provides much of the demand for Arctic products and will remain among the chief outlets for the expected rise in High Northern energy output, fishing, and tourism in future. As seen from the EU side, joining the “scramble for the vast mineral riches of the Arctic” also offers a way to “help stem anxiety about Europe’s energy security” (Traynor 2008) – a topic that has been steadily rising up the EU’s multi-functional security agenda. As these economic interactions continue and increase, the EU’s commercial, consumer, environmental, maritime and animal health regulations (among others) will thus impact upon all Arctic producers and exporters, not just the parts of the European High North already under its jurisdiction. Further, the EU is a major funder and agent of Arctic-related research, monitoring and analysis; and the Commission’s latest paper seems to be aiming to leverage this aspect more strongly as a means of influence.

Fourth comes an interesting paradox: on the one hand, these

concrete EU interests and roles in the Arctic are *prima facie* quite compatible with the local nations' hopes of profitable, sustainable development. At a Realpolitik level they are no harder to reconcile than the aims of the existing Arctic powers, and maybe easier, as the EU enters the arena as a "soft power" with no territorial demands and no means to threaten anyone. On the other hand, the Union has spoiled its image in several quarters by more "altruistic" attitudes adopted over relatively minor issues. Aspects of the Parliament and Commission texts in particular can be interpreted to represent the EU's new moral language and geopolitical discourse as a supposedly "ethical power", seeking to extend its normative control over the Northern social space and knowledge (e.g. Moisio 2003). The problems this creates are seen for instance, in the disagreements on whaling between the EU, and Norway, Iceland and the Inuit; those on sealing and trade in Arctic wildlife products between the EU, and the Inuit and Canada (see above); and disagreements on climate change and international climate policy between the EU and the Greenlandic Self-Government (e.g. Kleist 2010). While a clear effort can be seen on the EU's part recently to bridge these differences and seek ways of appeasing indigenous concerns – first of all by better dialogue, *vide* Damanaki's Greenland visit – the atmospheric damage is hard to dispel, and it remains one of the more tangible obstacles to the EU's hopes of being voted in as an Arctic Council observer any time soon.

Fifth and last, there has been a clear growth of emphasis on Greenland in EU policy and action since 2008, even if Greenland's formal status is limited to "one of the Overseas Countries Territories (OCTs) associated to the Community" (European Commission 2008, 12), and thus remains constitutionally dependent on an EU

member state (Airoldi 2008, 94). In the latest communication there are three detailed passages on Greenland, the last of which (European Commission and EU High Representative 2012, 18), claims that the EU has paid an average of 25 million Euro per annum to the territory since 2007. Most outlays are in the context of research and education, which will remain a top priority up to 2020. Since 2010, the EU and Greenland have had an agreement on cooperation for sustainable development and the environment, and since January 2012, a health cooperation agreement. In February 2012 a renewed Fisheries Partnership Agreement was signed for the years 2012-15, allowing the EU to spend up to 17.8 m. Euro per year on fishing assistance. These efforts and Mme Damanaki's recent visit have several practical motives, including the EU's wish to mend fences with indigenous peoples, but there may also be larger strategic points at stake. Creating direct institutional links with Greenland improves the odds on its staying politically in the European orbit even in the case of full independence; while for the Greenlanders facing a rapidly changing future, it may be reassuring to have backup from Europe's strongest economic bloc rather than a lone Nordic state.

To conclude: the EU has so far neither been a policy leader, nor been generally accepted as part of the governance system, in the broader Arctic region. Rather, its strategy-shaping can be seen as *reacting*, first to European Parliament pressure; second to the recent environmental and geopolitical changes in the Arctic; and third, to the perception of an emergent policy competition involving some of the Union's most important external partners.³⁵ Making an in-

35 Given the centrality of maritime issues for the Union, the more assertive aspects of Canadian and Russian policies on the Northern routes may have been of special concern; but worries over possible conflict will also have been fed by incidents such as the

stitutional strategy is also a way to try to reconcile positions among the more interested member countries, and give a policy lead to those so far less engaged. In the Arctic case, the EU's usual problems in achieving this have been compounded by lack of experience, requiring a steep learning curve since 2008. The latest EU policy formulations do reflect a greater understanding of realities including other players' views, but also express with growing confidence the perceived European responsibility and interest in fields like climate, energy, and shipping. Overall and regardless of its treatment in the Arctic Council, the EU is steadily making good its claims to be a significant Arctic player in the broader sense.

(misinterpreted) Russian expedition to the bottom of the Arctic Ocean in summer 2007 (Heininen 2010a).

III. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE STRATEGIES

III.1. Short comparative analysis

This comparative analysis of the Arctic strategies and state policies of the Arctic states is based on the above-mentioned comparative study and its summary version (Heininen, forthcoming). It is structured by using the following inwards- and-outwards-oriented indicators (cf also Table 3 above): 1) Sovereignty and comprehensive security, 2) Economic and business development, 3) Sustainable and regional development, 4) Environmental protection and climate change, 5) Safety, rescue and management, 6) Human dimension and (indigenous) peoples, 7) Research and knowledge, and 8) International cooperation. These correspond to the priorities/priority areas that are either explicitly mentioned/highlighted, or implicit, in the Arctic strategies/state policies so far examined. Here a short summary of the findings is offered as a starting point for the deeper analysis of the Arctic strategies.

First, all the strategies recognize, and those of the Nordic countries emphasize, the current stability and peacefulness of the Arctic region – with Iceland most explicitly warning against militarization. They also include the aspect of comprehensive security, either in general or in regard to climate change. In the cases of Finland, Iceland and Sweden the application of comprehensive security to the Arctic is emphasized. Conversely, however, state sovereignty as well as defence is mentioned and emphasized as a major or primary

priority in the strategies of all five littoral states of the Arctic Ocean: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, Russia and the USA.

Secondly, Economic and business development – generally referring to exploitation of natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable – is among the main priorities or key objectives of all the Arctic states, and also figures in EU strategy. The strategies of Finland, Iceland, Russia and the USA have the development of transportation among the priorities or objectives, while only Iceland and Russia emphasize the use of (cross-polar) air routes.

All the Arctic strategies name exploitation of fossil energy resources as one of the main economic activity and business opportunities in the Arctic region. The Kingdom of Denmark's and Norway's strategies, on the one hand, strongly emphasize "new" economic activities and industries in the Arctic, mostly meaning offshore fossils and minerals; and on the other, also highlight the use of renewable (marine) resources. Iceland's report specially stresses the opportunities for the fishing industry, on a sustainable basis, as well as shipping (and aviation), while Finland's strategy emphasizes transport and ship-building.

When addressing the utilization of natural resources the rhetoric of "sustainable development", or "sustainability", is present in all the Arctic strategies, notably in relation to energy resources. The strategies of the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway and Russia take into consideration internal regional policy, emphasizing the role of the northernmost regions of their countries. In the case of the Danish Realm the positions of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, particularly the new status of Greenland, are emphasized. The Finnish Strat-

egy takes into consideration the development of regional transport, logistic and communication networks.

Fourthly, environmental protection and climate change is either explicitly mentioned as a priority or priority area, or one of the basic objectives, in all the Arctic strategies except that of the Russian Federation. Canada's, Finland's and Sweden's Arctic strategies explicitly mention the environment or environmental heritage as a priority area. In the US State Policy environmental protection and conservation is mentioned as one of the policy objectives. The strategies of the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway and Sweden explicitly mention climate/climate change as a priority area.

Fifthly, safety and rescue, and broadly understood "management" (of resources) is among, or integrated in, the priorities and/or objectives of all the strategies. It is explicitly mentioned in the cases of Canada, Iceland, Norway, Russia and the USA. Maritime safety is included and emphasized in the objectives of all the strategies.

Sixthly, the "human dimension" – either referring to the population in general or indigenous peoples – is explicitly mentioned among the priorities/priority areas or objectives of the strategies of Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. Finland's, Norway's and Russia's strategies explicitly emphasize indigenous peoples. Iceland's policy principles and Sweden's Strategy refer to the people of the region, or human dimension, in general terms. Canada's and the Kingdom of Denmark's strategies refer to human health and well-being. Finally, the US State Policy does not include this dimension.

Seventh, research and knowledge – meaning science, technology and monitoring, and international cooperation on research (and monitoring) – is either explicitly mentioned as a priority, or an ob-

jective, in all the Arctic strategies. Research is explicitly highlighted in the Icelandic report and the US State Policy, and implicitly integrated in the Finnish and Swedish strategies. The strategy of the Kingdom of Denmark and that of Norway emphasize knowledge on climate change and its impacts.

Last and not least, international cooperation *per se*, as well as the need to make use of several specific legal frameworks (UNCLOS) and/or international organizations for such cooperation, is explicitly mentioned in all the Arctic strategies. The Arctic Council is mentioned by all of them, and emphasized as a major venue for international cooperation in the Arctic in most of them. The Kingdom of Denmark's Strategy is however the only one that emphasizes cooperation with(in) NATO. Further, the Kingdom of Denmark's Strategy and that of Finland are the only ones to include a worldwide and global perspective.

III.2. Reflections on theory

We may first use these findings to re-visit the issues raised near the start of this article regarding the application of theoretical frameworks to the Arctic/High North strategies and state policies under study. If none of the strategy documents itself is found citing theoretical definitions, that is only to be expected in real-life policy statements by a set of governments that – at least since the demise of Soviet Communism – have preferred to trade in everyday abstractions like “good governance”, “democracy”, “the natural heritage” and so on. Similarly, the EU's texts relate the Arctic to its own established policy concepts rather than any externally defined ideology.

A case can nevertheless be made that the strategies of the five littoral states are all to some degree flavoured by Realist thinking

and by the associated state-based, competitive and zero-sum conception of security. The most obvious example is the emphasis they place on sovereignty and on protecting or defending it, both as a principle, and in terms of maximising territorial claims and the implied control of resources. Military power is identified especially clearly in the US and Russia strategies as the *ultima ratio* for securing these national interests: the former talking about the need to “project sea power throughout the region” and the latter about “a necessary fighting potential”. The Canadian strategy also identifies military assets as vital for the occupation and control of national possessions. While the Norwegian strategy and that of the Kingdom of Denmark are less overtly militaristic, they convey a hardly less robust message about protecting national interests by whatever means it takes, including the management of key state-to-state relationships for example between Norway and Russia. In the Danish case, keeping control of any process leading to Greenlandic independence is a fundamental concern. One feature of the logic behind these stances that particularly links the Norwegian and Russian strategies is the stress they place on the importance of Arctic resources for the economic wellbeing and, indeed, survival of their entire nations.

True, all these nations also refer to the need to maintain the Arctic as a zone of peace; the importance of respect for law; and the need for international cooperation between states and through institutions. The Russian strategy says the least about this, but partly because – like Moscow’s broader security strategies – it has a strong inward-facing character and is correspondingly much more detailed on internal coordination. All five littoral-state strategies are nevertheless compatible with the pro-peace, pro-international

law statements signed up to by the same five governments at Ilulissat. The question is whether these apparently “institutionalist” elements reflect a different theoretical strand, or whether they can be read as a Neo-realist attempt to select and use the international frameworks that promise the best results for national interests with the least constraint on national freedom.

In favour of the latter reading is that fact that, for the moment, all states with formal territorial claims have reason to bolster the credibility of the UNCLOS framework in the hope that its adjudication will eventually deliver what they ask for. All stronger states can also without hesitation endorse the Arctic Council, as that institution has no constraining powers to damage them and plainly cannot prevent them from ignoring its competences when they so wish (as in their separate meetings at Ilulissat and Chelsea, Quebec).³⁶

It is surely no accident that the governments most strongly stressing their sovereign territorial control, Canada and Russia, are also those most clearly opposing the grant of permanent AC observership to the EU or China: a move that would be bound to change the AC’s own nature and dynamics, as well as enhancing the status of potential competitors. Similarly, no littoral state, except possibly the US, seems interested in engaging the UN which would bring its own distinct, more global culture and power balance with it. (The relevance of this aspect has been sharpened with the growing debate, and division of Arctic views, over the future involvement of China – see the Iceland section above – which would, of course, have a casting vote in anything handled through the UN Security Council.) The rejection of a single, legally binding Arctic Treaty by

³⁶ The concept of “power games” as used by Keohane (1986) and Mearsheimer (2001) is relevant here

all players within the region fits perfectly into the same picture. All this does not mean that the leading states do not want, or will not make, multilateral deals on a basis of shared advantage: simply that they will do so in the frameworks of their own choosing, and by methods that – at least for the crucial territorial and resource issues – allow a rather traditional reading of national interests and balance of power to determine the outcome.³⁷

Realist theory could also offer an explanation for different emphases seen in the strategies of Finland, Iceland, Sweden, the EU, and to some degree in that of the Kingdom of Denmark. These all make less play with sovereignty as such and with national determination to enforce it, but place much greater stress on peaceful and inclusive multilateral governance. The obvious interpretation is that these are smaller actors, whose interests are best served by *multilateralizing* any power relationship where realist arithmetic puts them at a disadvantage. International law and good governance are in a concrete sense elements of protection for such players, while working through formally constituted institutions gives them hope of a nominal equality, where their voices can be more clearly heard. (This last concern is typical of small states strategies in general – see (Wivel, 2005) – and it clearly drives the Icelanders, the Finns and the Swedes when critiquing the separate meetings of the Ilulissat five.) Arguably, it also serves the interests of such nations to prioritize economic development highly, in the hope that market economics – to the extent they can operate in this area! – tend to blur tradi-

37 Canada has also been conspicuous in opposing the adoption of institutional positions on the Arctic in NATO and at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Its consistent argument is that Arctic management is best to leave for the nations and organizations within the region.

tional power relations and can offer niches, perhaps very profitable ones, for smaller contributors. Iceland in particular might use its geographical position as a power asset by attracting others to establish commercial bases and transit facilities there, while Finland and Sweden's strategies hint at the industrial and technological strengths they might leverage to overcome the disadvantage of having no Arctic coastlines.

However, there are also some nuances that would fit better with newer theoretical approaches where institutions are seen as having a character and significance of their own, going beyond the sum of their national parts. Particularly interesting in this context is that greater access by the EU to the AC is generally opposed by the indigenous peoples represented there, but is supported by the Council's Nordic members and plays a central part in Finland's approach. The more defensive local view seems to reflect not just a preference for tradition and for local expertise, but a feeling that the EU entry would open the way for the "big world" and "globalization" to interfere in High Northern affairs and subvert familiar relationships. For Finland, and perhaps for Sweden, this is exactly what should happen, because such "opening" ought to improve their own room for manoeuvre and influence in face of the double drawback of military smallness and no Arctic coastline. Iceland also seems to see the EU as a potential corrective and positive catalyst in the local balance, irrespective of whether it becomes a Union member state itself or not.

How much difference a stronger EU role would actually make can only be a matter for guesswork at this stage: not just because of the continuing blockages in its way, but because its own nature is mixed and distinct from that of any actor ever involved in the

Arctic in the past. It behaves like a self-assertive realist power in some ways, for instance in fisheries negotiations, in its demand for free access for shipping through the two Northern Passages, and the implied determination to secure commercial access for EU companies. Other elements of its emergent strategy, however, such as the high emphasis on climate change management or human and animal rights, fit its image of being somehow “above power” and championing collective or universal values. In terms of practical process, the EU would also bring new features to Arctic governance through the roles of its collective staffs, the European External Action Service and the European Commission, and the sizeable common funds that it might be able to deploy for purposes like monitoring and research, area development, environmental and perhaps social protection.

Three other features that fit less well in a Realist paradigm may be more briefly mentioned. First is the concern for global goods, such as protection of the environment and the general management of climate change that is shown in all the strategies, if less so in that of Russia. While states certainly have selfish interests at stake in protecting habitats and minimizing the damaging and costly effects of change, all do seem to grasp that the future of the Arctic ecosphere and its interplay with global climate processes are higher-order issues that cannot be resolved by zero-sum national politics. This realization may be traced back to the earliest beginnings of multilateral cooperation among Arctic nations, where scientific projects and contacts among meteorologists and naturalists led the way. A further strand in environmentalist thinking is the protection of “those who cannot speak for themselves”, and a similar concern to support weaker players might be seen in the emphasis placed on

indigenous peoples' rights even in the strategy of some states who have no such minorities themselves. Finally, in the environmental field in contrast to some others, no Arctic state seems to be trying to keep a regional monopoly of deal-making or to deny the need for embedding local solutions in a global approach. The European members of the AC are among the nations most ready to subject their environmental policies to internationally binding regulation, and the USA has moved further in that direction under President Obama.³⁸ Overall, it seems hard to deny that national realism is mixed in this set of strategies with an element of self-restraint and concern for the "global commons" that would fit with theories like liberal institutionalism.³⁹

Secondly, the reference above to indigenous peoples is a reminder that the Arctic system today does contain significant non-state actors, even if their role is less developed than in more heavily populated and deeply integrated regions. Where indigenous groups have gained a degree of control over (natural) resources and/or spatial decision-making, they will play roles in future Arctic governance that cannot simply be equated with or subsumed by the positions of the relevant governments. Further, international non-governmental organizations – above all those concerned with the environment – are already paying close attention to the Arctic, and have by no means yet shown their full potential for direct action and indirect influence. Given that not all littoral states are equally

38 A similar point might be made about AC's member-countries' readiness to work with the globally-competent International Maritime Organization (IMO) to develop regulations for Arctic shipping and search-and-rescue (and prospectively, on oil spills).

39 It could of course still be argued that fine pro-environment sentiments are just a matter of tactical showcasing, in some national strategies at least: this hypothesis is looked at further in the next sub-section.

open to their advice, their possibilities would also be enhanced by any growth in the roles of collective actors like the EU or the UN that have non-governmental consultation built in to their procedures. On the other side, it is by no means to be ruled out that destructive non-state forces like terrorists, cyber-saboteurs, smugglers and other criminals could be attracted by the opening up of a new Arctic frontier. All these non-state phenomena are hard to capture within a Realist framework and, indeed, stretch the limits of most classic international theories – including classical geopolitics. They are better served by the recent discourse of globalization, which stresses the growing limitations on the power of nation-states and state-based organizations to control the full dynamics, not just of economic development, but also of multi-dimensional security processes today (Scholte, 2005).

Third and last, how should we interpret the stress that all national strategies place on self-definition and their prominent claims to an “Arctic” identity? In some cases – especially for the littoral states – these formula have an internal-political logic: they signal solidarity with their respective Far-North populations, while simultaneously underlining that the fate of those provinces is too strategically important to leave just to the locals. To the outer world, the message conveyed is one of belonging to a select geo-political community with presumed special rights to decide the Far North’s future: it is implicitly inclusive and exclusive at the same time. In both these contexts, the strategies’ definitions could be interpreted using the theory of Social Constructivism which highlights motives and processes linked with the importance of belonging, including the subjective as well as practical dynamics that drive institution-building and the way that experience of more-than-national group-

ings can affect national consciousness in its turn.⁴⁰ However, a Realist could also offer more cynical explanations about the value of such identity labels as power tools to influence opinion at home and abroad. Claims of “I’m-more-Arctic-than-you-are” could simply be a further mode of inter-state competition, easily explained by the new geopolitical importance of the space in question and the wish to keep intruding powers at bay (Ingimundarson, 2011b).

III.3. The nature of “strategies”

The set of documents analysed here provide good illustrations of many the features shared by general or sectoral security “strategies” in the 21st century. In structure as well as coverage they reflect the multi-functional approach to security and governance that is now followed not just by the larger Euro-Atlantic institutions but by states and groupings in most regions of the world. They are complex also in their vision of solutions, envisaging a mixture of internal and external, legal and administrative action, and citing a variety of international institutions and instruments to be used for multiple purposes. A further up-to-date feature is the stress placed on process, usually defined in terms of “[good] governance”, alongside practical goals. Indeed some of the more “internationalist” strategies imply that getting governance right is the key to the whole Arctic enterprise, including the solution of future problems still unknown.

At the same time, all the strategies share certain limitations that are also typical of the genre. They are relatively short and thus cannot provide detailed administrative guidelines and taskings. They

⁴⁰ Social Constructivism has been applied especially to the explanation of developments in European integration: see (Winer and Diez, 2009).

are by definition not legally-binding, and resemble statements of intent or aspiration rather than fully considered work programmes – not least because they lack clear time-plans and deadlines, budget estimates or other resource provisions. These features raise questions over how far the strategies’ prescriptions will actually be followed and their goals met in reality. They also make it hard for parliaments or NGOs to use such documents as a basis for checking on progress and holding their governments to account.⁴¹

The main question remaining for discussion is how far the strategies have also been shaped by their public nature and their “public relations” function. Tracing such effects depends on who the audience is, and an initial distinction can be made between the strategies that seem mainly or largely to be addressing domestic opinion and those that are pitched more at outside observers. The documents from Canada and Russia are probably the most inward-looking, so that at least some of their strong language about protecting (maritime) sovereignty, territory and resources may be read as reassurance for domestic constituencies.⁴² The US document places more emphasis overall on cooperation and on establishing common ground with other actors; but it says explicitly at one point that the Administration “is prepared to operate *either independently or in conjunction*” with other powers (authors’ italics), and its dis-

41 A further issue is whether the actual production of strategies involves any “democratic” elements of popular consultation and bottom-up policy forming. The answer is usually not much, even in Western countries; although the completed documents may be introduced and debated in a parliament. Iceland’s Arctic strategy is unusual in this regard because Parliament (the Alþingi) was effectively given the final word on it.

42 In both these countries, also, the need to demonstratively address local populations’ concerns reflects the relative poverty of Northern provinces and the inadequate central attention paid to their problems in the past.

cussion of “homeland security” in terms of new (e.g. terrorist) as well as old threats reflects a distinctive national security mentality. Some elements of the Norwegian strategy also seem to be conveying a domestic message about the role of the Far North within the nation, and the emphasis on working with Russia does not contradict this as cross-border cooperation is popular in both Europe and the Northern provinces. It has already been noted what an important underlying theme Denmark’s relationship with Greenland provides in the strategy of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Again, it is the smaller states, and those more distant from the Arctic Ocean, that have the least obviously “national” or “domestic” content in their strategies and that show the greatest concern for and responsiveness to international opinion. Aside from directly stressing cooperative intent and the theme of governance, they seem at times to be deliberately echoing previous statements and strategies from countries or groups with which they want to make common cause. It is not surprising that the Finnish strategy should be influenced by previous EU policy statements, since it makes the EU such a central feature and vehicle of national policy. Sweden’s text is influenced by the earlier statements of Nordic neighbours as well as its own lack of access to the Arctic Ocean, with the result that it plays down sovereignty in favour of (efficient) multilateral cooperation in, and for dealing with, the Arctic. This is a logical continuation of a more general recent trend for Sweden to seek concrete military cooperation with its Nordic neighbors – Finland and Norway – for instance in equipment procurement, coordinated patrolling (e.g. for surveillance of the Icelandic air space) and joint exercising (Lunde Saxi, 2011). The Swedish strategy also emphasizes climate and the environment, and introduces “The Human Dimen-

sion” as a new formulation in the Arctic context, possibly because these were designed to be strong emphases in Sweden’s chairmanship of the Arctic Council beginning in 2012.

The question raised by these presentational tactics – and also by the signals of cooperation and peaceful intent in the larger players’ strategies – is a double one. Can the states concerned be trusted to behave in the same altruistic and reasonable way as their statements imply, if real crises and clashes of interest arise over the Arctic region in future? Which in the end will be decisive: the common features that the strategies display as a result of the disciplines of the genre and, to some degree, of conscious imitation, or the diverging elements of national interest and national strategic culture that underlie them? Conversely, can strategies that are largely designed to ‘look good’, and which therefore take many of their cues from other peoples’ group-think and conventional wisdom, truly represent the distinctive national interests of even the smallest state? When strategy-drafting becomes an exercise in international public relations, it is less likely either to reflect, or to stimulate serious thought about, the individual balance of profit and loss that Arctic development holds for each state. It is also liable to drift away from grassroots thinking and parlance, in a way that may be hard to avoid but is dangerous if taken too far.⁴³ Public lack of understanding and interest is no sound foundation for policies that may demand both large resource inputs and difficult choices, if the future of the Arctic develops as dramatically as most are predicting.

43 This problem is further discussed in pp. 36-37 of (Bailes, 2009a).

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The recently adopted set of Arctic strategies studied here have revealed interesting parallels and contrasts that reflect, not just their different national (and institutional) origins, but the complexity and ambivalence of public strategy-making as a process. They also reflect the transitional nature of 21st century international governance, in that no single theory of IR can be used to explain their contents – and implicit aims – without the risk of missing important subtleties from the picture.

Beyond question, the treatment of territorial control, claims, and military aspects in all the documents that cover them is distinctly “Realist”. Often, the treatment of institutional frameworks could also be explained in Neo-realist terms inasmuch as nations favour those bodies that they think will endorse their claims (UNCLOS), or those that are too weak to damage them and operate in non-vital areas (Arctic Council); while all oppose a truly constraining Arctic Treaty. Russian and Canadian opposition to letting the EU into the picture speaks the same way, and the USA seems to be the only one willing to get the UN involved. It is important, however, not to make the hasty logical leap taken in some Arctic commentaries by assuming that a Realist approach equals a likelihood of conflict. In the present case, there are many signals hinting that the larger states’ basic needs could be accommodated for mutual profit: merely, they might prefer to do the key deal(s) in their own, old-fashioned, “horse-trading” way.

On the other hand and in practice as well as theory, some issues crucial for the Arctic future such as environment/climate change,

the related scientific and monitoring work, and arguably also fair treatment for indigenous peoples, cannot find any obvious solution in a Realist/Neo-realist world where national interests can at best be paid off with slices of a finite cake, and no “intrusive” international regulation or monitoring is allowed.⁴⁴ All strategies could therefore be signalling something genuine when looking to collective regional or even global governance of these particular aspects – even if each nation’s general stance on climate policy is likely to condition the way it approach agreements up North, more than *vice versa*. The region’s own relatively “weak” Arctic Council has shown that it can mediate solutions on points of obvious common interest such as search and rescue and response to polluting events, even if the legal enactment of compromises reached has to take place elsewhere. Finally, one should not underestimate the potential impact of bottom-up, non-state policy-driving campaigns, inspired for example by the plight of polar bears and by specific fears of pollution (eg from oil-well blow-outs).

The EU is *sui generis* in this setting, both in its own identity (or lack of it) and its processes of strategy-building. Closer insertion of the EU into the Arctic game would both complicate and change the process of seeking negotiated solutions, since to some extent it plays as a self-assertive realist actor (e.g. on free transit and access to trade/resources) but also poses as in some sense “above power” and reflecting collective or universal values. The European Commission in particular – which might wield major funds to join for instance

44 This question is asked and discussed in (Heininen 2010a).

in the research and exploration game – is unlike any actor ever engaged in the region before.

As to the questions posed initially about genuineness and “signalling” in 21st-century strategies: some of the Arctic strategies analysed are signalling more inwards, and some more outwards. In general the inward signals imply a stronger resolve than may actually be there, and the outward signals a more cooperative intent than may really be there. Thus, for example, questions may be raised at two levels about the cooperatively-phased Ilulissat declaration of the five littoral states in 2008: did these states really intend to abjure competitive behaviour and power-play, and how did Denmark’s and Norway’s keenness to be present square with the common Nordic loyalties and values highlighted in their other statements?⁴⁵ There are also some signs of “group-think” and mutual imitation impacting particularly on the Danish, Finnish and US documents as well as (naturally enough) the collective EU statement.

Finally, the strategies reflect the shared need of the Arctic states to identify themselves, first as Arctic nations and countries, and second as real players or actors in the Arctic region: signalled through self-descriptions like “global player in the Arctic”, “the best steward of resources in the High North” or “a leading Arctic power”. As such, the emphasis on identity and recognition might seem to fit with Social Constructivism, but we prefer to take a more cynical approach and interpret this as Realist thinking and top-down manipulation of domestic and international opinion. Whether the claims made are to benevolent or self-interested roles, they all form part of an ‘I’m-more-Arctic-than-you-are’ inter-state competition. Taken to

45 For more on Nordic solidarity or division see (Bailes and Ólafsson, forthcoming).

gether with the ambivalence of strategy statements in general, these examples offer a salutary reminder that words and deeds are two different things, and claims to power are not necessarily the same as power itself. When all the analysis is completed, the real questions about what will happen in the Arctic, and who or what will drive it, remain as open as ever.

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STRATEGY PAPERS
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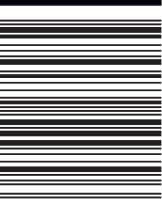
By Alyson JK Bailes & Lassi Heininen

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The future of the Arctic, as its ice melts by land and sea, has become a hot topic in governmental as well as academic and media circles. Over the last decade, each of the eight countries that founded the Arctic Council – Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the USA – has published at least one major policy document on the topic, as has the European Union as an institution. Often called Arctic ‘strategies’, these documents address a wide range of issues in the economic, environmental, and institutional fields as well as more basic issues of safety and sovereignty. They reveal a lot about different actors’ concerns and goals, both on substantial issues and the future governance of Arctic affairs.

A comparison of these strategies holds interest also for small state studies, since some of Europe’s smallest states and territories coexist in the Arctic space with giants like the USA and Russia. According to theory, the weaker players in such a group should be looking for solutions through protection from larger powers, and/or from institutions that can help to establish a level playing-field of law and regulation. In the Arctic, the shape of such solutions is only gradually emerging. What outcomes, similar or different, are the individual small nations of the region working for and what actual impact are they having on the process?

This study by Alyson JK Bailes of the University of Iceland and Lassi Heininen of the University of Rovaniemi addresses all those questions and more, including the functionality and the theoretical basis of ‘strategies’ as such. As stressed by Ólafur Þórður Harðarson, Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland, in his preface to the work, their findings show the value of collaborative research among the North’s small nations and should help to stimulate more of it.



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